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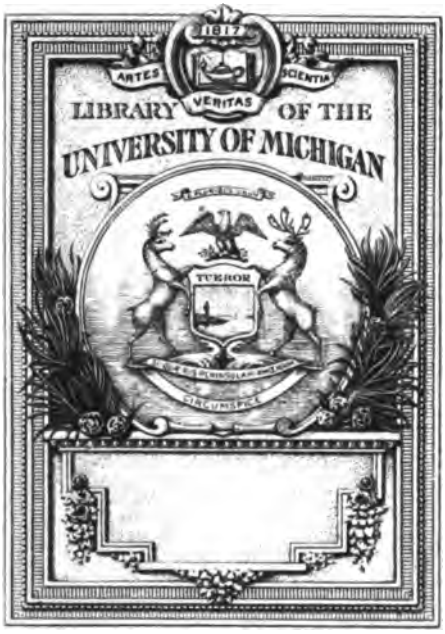
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HISTORY

OF

MORAL SCIENCE.

BY

ROBERT BLAKEY,

AUTHOR OF AN ESSAY ON MORAL GOOD AND EVIL.

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HISTORY

OF

MORAL SCIENCE.

CHAPTER XVI.

DR. HUTCHESON.

ON THE PASSIONS.

Dr. Hutcheson's treatise on the passions is a book of considerable ingenuity and importance. He seems to have set a high value upon it himself, and his affection for it may have been considerably heightened from the consideration that it was his first production, and what contributed in a material degree to bring him into notice as a moral writer. This work is divided into two parts, one on the nature and conduct of the passions, and the other contains further illustrations of the doctrine of a moral sense, and an examination of the systems of Mr. Wollaston, Dr. Clarke, and others.

The first part, which relates to the nature and conduct of the passions, is by far the most interesting and instructive; and I here beg to premise, that

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I intend to follow the same plan in my remarks upon the passions, which I followed in the preceding chapter on the doctrine of a moral sense. What I propose advancing will partake more of a general commentary or dissertation on the nature of the passions, than a literal analysis of Dr. Hutcheson's work. But in doing this I lay little claim to originality, as the subject has been so often handled by able writers, that nothing new except relatively the mere arrangement can be expected. What I wish to accomplish is, to give the reader a general conception of the nature of our various passions, and to fix on his attention some of those general laws which guide, in all cases, their operation.

Those who have looked upon human affairs with any degree of attention, must have been struck with the beautiful regularity and harmony,—the wonderful adaptation of means to ends, which are so conspicuous amidst the seemingly conflicting and jarring passions which propel individuals and societies towards some given end or object. Man's moral constitution furnishes every one who contemplates it in a becoming and proper frame of mind, with objects of the deepest interest, and most lively pleasure. We are too apt, when looking into nature's works, either with a view of deriving know-

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ledge and amusement, or of heightening our devotional feelings of reverence and humility towards Him who created and regulates all things, to confine our observations to the material world; to gaze upon the stupendous mountains, the majestic rivers, the beautiful landscapes, the wonders of the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms, the terrors of the thunder, and the devastations of the earthquake and the volcano. And it must be admitted, that these objects are calculated and intended to excite our curiosity, and call forth our praise; but at the same time, we ought to recollect, that they by no means form exclusive objects for our rational inquiry and admiration. In our moral nature, we may trace, in well defined characters, the hand of omnipotent wisdom, order and skill. The various desires, appetites, and passions, which animate us in every era of our life—from the cradle to the grave—and in every situation, whether roaming in the woods, or living in civilized and polished society; are so nicely adjusted, so accurately balanced, and so unerringly directed to their proper ends and uses, that the whole *moral man* presents an object skilfully arranged, and beautifully proportioned. The elements which administer to this harmony and concord are of various descriptions and of differ-

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ent degrees of strength; some of a repulsive, and others of an attractive nature: but they all possess that qualification which fits them to act their respective parts in the drama of human life; and though resembling the apparently confused and disordered elements of the material world, they nevertheless have that innate principle of unity of object, and singleness of purpose, which is so conspicuously exhibited in every part of the whole fabric of nature.

Though we maintain, that the moral nature of man presents as many proofs of the goodness, wisdom, and omnipotence of the Deity, as any other department of nature; yet it is not by this meant to deny that there is not to be found some portion of disorder—some remnant of confusion; but this ought not, by any means, to check our admiration, or blind us to what is constructed with such wisdom. We praise the mechanism of our bodily frame; we admire the harmony of its parts, their nice adjustment, and their adaptation for the ends they were intended to produce; but our body, though justly a subject of wonder in its contrivance, still carries in its own nature the seeds of its entire dissolution; and every function, whose exercise affords us such matter for curious contemplation,

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bears in its elementary constitution the principle which will effectually destroy its power. But we admire and praise the exquisite workmanship of this frame, notwithstanding its imperfections, which are always present to our view. Just so should we look upon our moral natures; our passions and appetites are the fruitful source of many evils, of much confusion, vice, and suffering; and yet when we view the effects of these passions, upon the whole, they act with wonderful harmony and concord; and it would be extremely difficult for us to point out any alteration in their original structure or force, which would not have the effect of destroying that mutual relation and dependence of parts, so necessary to produce unity and singleness of effect, which mark the general character of the works of nature and providence. It cannot be said of any one of our passions, *when taken singly*, that it is of an evil or pernicious nature; it becomes bad only from the *excess* of its indulgence. Even anger and revenge are necessary for the preservation of the individual, as well as of society; and though liable to produce evils of various kinds and degrees, yet when viewed in a proper light, their effect may be said to be good in the general economy of the passions.—

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" Passions, like elements, though born to fight,
Yet mix'd and soften'd, in his work unite;
These 'tis enough to temper and employ;
But what composes man, can man destroy?
Suffice that reason keep to nature's road,
Subject, compound them, follow her and God.
Love, hope, and joy, fair pleasure's smiling train,
Hate, fear, and grief, the family of pain;
These mix'd with art, and to due bounds confin'd,
Make and maintain the balance of the mind,
The lights and shades, whose well accorded strife,
Give all the strength, and colour of our life."*

The moral growth of the individual, furnishes us with fruitful topics for curious and instructive contemplation. In the early stages of man's existence, almost all his passions lie dormant; but as he advances to maturity, they become gradually developed according to his present necessities and wants; and many of these passions are of such a nature as to grow with his growth and strengthen with his years. In this development of his passions, the greatest degree of wisdom and order are manifested; they do not start up in his bosom in an irregular and confused manner, but gradually unfold themselves in strict conformity with his other faculties, and square in wonderfully with the present state of his bodily strength, intellectual improve-

* Essay on Man.

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ment, and social propensities. Were this not the case, nothing but confusion and disorder would be perceptible in human affairs ; no such thing as comfort and sociality could be found, nor could society itself exist for a single day, if submitted to the influence of principles diametrically opposite to those by which it is at present regulated and upheld. How lamentable would it be, for example, for a child of five or six years old to be possessed of a strong desire of power and dominion ; an ardent desire to benefit mankind by his labours, when he is destitute of strength sufficient to take care of himself; without knowledge, prudence, foresight, and many other moral and mental qualifications, which are the fruits only of his riper years and understanding, and are necessary for a man's advancement in honourable distinction in society! Yet such gnawing desires, with impotence of means, would every way prevail amongst mankind, were their passions not developed and regulated by that happy economy and consummate wisdom we see around us on every side.

Man, as has frequently been remarked, comes into the world the most helpless and pitiful of all creatures. But tender and delicate as his infant years are, and entirely destitute of the means of

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providing for his numerous and pressing wants, he nevertheless finds a constant resource in the kindness and affection of parents, whose parental duties are suggested and enforced by instinctive impulses the most impetuous and overwhelming. As he grows apace, his moral and physical powers expand in a regular order and proportion. The love of novelty, of activity, and of praise, form the principal springs of action in his early years. He becomes gradually sensible of the good and bad consequences of his actions; grows fond of his own home, evinces kind affections for his parents, brethren, and acquaintances; feels a strong interest in their welfare; considers himself a member of the little community of his father's household; learns to know the meaning of obligation and duty; and thus the evolutions of his moral powers is progressively provided for by those very wants, weaknesses, and dangers, which beset him in the early part of his existence.* But at this period, all his passions are weak, and are made subservient only to the gratification of his own wants, or of the wants of those who are more immediately connected with him. The love of posthumous fame, of distinction, of country, and of power, have not as yet shot up

* See the Article on Moral Science in the Encyclopædia Britannica.

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in his bosom. All is pure unadulterated selfishness. He cannot discriminate between the interests of the individual and the interests of the community. Here it is that great wisdom is manifested in the growth of his moral powers. By paying exclusive attention to his own individual wants in the early part of his career, man is enabled to arrive at the highest state of perfection of which his nature is susceptible; for by bringing his moral and physical energies into play only when in a full state of maturity, and when their joint exercise can alone produce those consequences or ends which are of such momentous importance both to society and himself, he thereby secures more effectually his own preservation, and elevates himself to that sphere of intellectual excellence and moral responsibility and usefulness in which he has been destined to move.

As he advances in years, new moral powers are evolved, and new principles of action are brought into operation. In the prime of life, the attention to the security and private enjoyment of the individual becomes less marked and striking, and he gives himself up more freely to the unrestrained desires and pleasures, the social interests and endearments which naturally result from a state of society. He feels himself inclined and fully com-

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petent to take a part in the important transactions of the world, to enter into all its amusements, participate in all its cares and dangers, and to sympathize deeply with every thing which can, in the remotest degree, affect the prosperity and existence of the social compact. From this direction given to his moral powers, a multitude of fresh duties press upon his attention, which are performed with more or less alacrity and pleasure, according to the agent's growth in moral rectitude and perfection. The love of country, a desire to benefit mankind, friendship, gratitude, sincerity, and universal benevolence, take firm possession of the soul; and the exercise of these virtuous affections is attended, either immediately or prospectively, with the most refined and exalted enjoyments. As the virtuous propensities which directly lead to happiness are at this period the strongest, so likewise are these passions, the slightest excess or ill management of which is productive of evil. Now it is that all the advantages of good and all the evils of bad education and example are felt and enjoyed. Man, in the plenitude of his strength, requires all the restraints which government, morality, and religion can lay upon him, to regulate and moderate the impetuosity of his passions, which but too frequently break down

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the boundaries of virtue, honour, and prudence, and involve him in a scene of intemperance, profligacy, and guilty ambition, which bring ruin, misery, and bitter reflections upon himself, and consequences the most calamitous upon his friends, and the society of which he is a member.

But as man arrives at the last epoch of his existence, many of his passions partake of the weakness and want of tone of his bodily functions; and the aggregate effect of all his passions upon society becomes considerably diminished. The fickleness and selfishness of second childhood steal imperceptibly upon him as soon as he passes the meridian of life. Patriotic feelings are now, in his eyes, the effects of a distempered brain; general benevolence shows a great want of experience in human nature; and every contemplated change in the conduct of the individual, or in the civil institutions of his country, is, in his conception, visionary, impracticable, and dangerous. He is inclined, and he conceives it his duty to give counsel rather than to engage in action; to guide and temper the sanguine impetuosity of youth and manhood, than himself to be an active agent in the bustling concerns of the world. The infinite variety of passion and action which fills the world has now little hold of his af-

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fections. He views the busy scene of the world under a more considerate and sombre aspect; and he calculates with more accuracy and precision the consequences of his own actions. The love of ease, the love of wealth, interestedness, foresight, and affection for his offspring, seem to be the principal moral springs which excite him to action. But as his bodily infirmities increase, and he hastens with rapid strides to the grave, his moral faculties become entirely paralyzed, and he is scarcely considered in the light of a moral agent, but becomes, as in the first dawn of his mental career, an object of pity and compassion, presenting a lesson, at once mortifying and instructive, to surviving mortality.

From this short and but very imperfect sketch of the moral nature of man, which has been inserted by way of introduction to what is to follow, we may see that every part of his nature is so admirably adjusted, as to produce the exact object for which it was intended. Like the conception we endeavour to form of a perfect piece of machinery, we can discover no waste of strength or misapplication of power, but the force applied is always commensurate to the effect produced. Man, in his early years, is attentive only to his own wants,

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and thus the individual is reared fit for the duties and obligations which his neighbours and society require at his hands. As he advances in riper years and understanding, he extends his views, does not always confine his attention to himself, but enters with spirit and enthusiasm into the affairs of others; and this passion of social benevolence, and ardent desire to benefit others, is generally most vigorous when it can be promptly seconded by a proportional share of bodily strength and health. As time continues to impair his physical organs, and lessens his activity, so these impulses which propel him to take a deep interest in the affairs of his brethren of mankind, seem to grow weaker in a direct ratio; and as the infirmities of the flesh exclude him from mixing much in the busy scene of the world, he gradually, as it were, relinquishes his hold of society, when he is no longer able to take a part in it; and confines himself to the gratification of his private passions, which have for their object his own individual ease, security, and comfort. It is thus that every state and period of human life has passions and desires suited to its nature and wants. Men have to play a certain part on the stage of life, and when this is done they must make way for other actors in the drama.

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The moral system of the universe is carried on by a kind of rotatory motion, which produces that infinite diversity and novelty of passion which are exhibited every way around us.

Leaving these general remarks on the moral capacities of man, let us look a little more in detail into the nature and operation of his various passions. In doing this we will be as brief as the nature of the subject will permit.

The classification of the passions has, in the writings of moralists, been subject to much variety and change. The passions have been divided and subdivided according to the humour or theoretical views of the writer. The very ancient division, that which arranged all our affections, passions, and desires under two divisions, namely, love and hatred, is the most general and comprehensive, and at the same time, perhaps, the most correct. But for our present purpose, we will consider the passions relatively to their objects, and divide them into two classes, those which have for their object the good of the individual, or private passions, such as love of life, of pleasure, of ease, of power, and the like; and the other public affections, or those which carry us beyond ourselves, and make us feel an interest in the affairs of others, such as gratitude,

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compassion, friendship, love of country, patriotism, &c. The private affections may be also divided into two kinds, those which relate immediately to the protection of the individual, such as fear, anger, resentment, &c. and others which aim at procuring some positive good, as wealth, power, fame, and the like.

The first general law which seems to suggest itself, upon an inquiry into the nature and operation of the passions, is, that in proportion as any one given passion gains a power or ascendancy of the mind, that passion lessens the power or force of all the other passions in an exact degree. This may be very strikingly illustrated by examining the influence which some of the private passions possess, such as fear, resentment, and love of wealth. When fear takes a firm hold of the mind, it brings the whole man under complete subjection, paralyzes all the other faculties of the soul, and prevents him from turning those circumstances and events to any useful purpose towards his own comfort or even existence, which were meant to advance the one, and secure the other; the effects of revenge, or excessive resentment for injuries sustained, operate in a similar manner. By the violent commotions they raise in our frame, they deprive us of all that cau-

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tion, prudence, and foresight, which are always so essential to our welfare, whether engaged in private or in public life, and, besides making us appear in the eyes of others as objects of pity and contempt, the excessive indulgence of these resentful feelings not unfrequently plunges us into a course of violence, no way proportioned to the injuries sustained, which endanger our own and others' existence, and produce bitter inward reflections to the end of our days. Avarice, or an excessive craving after wealth, does also weaken the power or force of the other passions, particularly the generous kind, in proportion to its strength over the individual. The grovelling and sordid desires of the miser, check the growth of all public spirit and patriotism; and even those social feelings and propensities which arise from the relations between friends, neighbours, and acquaintances, wither and die under its pestiferous influence, and the whole man becomes an object of meanness, littleness, and contempt. Even this extravagant desire of wealth defeats, in many cases, its own object; for the miser is so engrossed with his darling treasures, whether they be great or small, that he cannot think of advancing any portion of his wealth in speculative concerns or mercantile enterprises, which, when judiciously ma-

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naged, become a great source of riches to those who engage in them.

Further illustrations of this general law may also be obtained from considering the effects of the public affections. Man is evidently made for society. He cannot confine his social propensities to his family or neighbours, but they irresistibly draw him into larger and more comprehensive communities and commonwealths. This gives rise to patriotism, or love of country, one of the most noble and interesting passions which can animate the human form. Public spirit, or a desire to benefit our country, or mankind in general, renders the possessor an object of universal admiration and respect, because, as these affections are the offspring of the noblest minds, so do they also become the parents of the greatest benefits to society. The true patriot continues in his course of well-doing with steadiness and determination, neither awed on the one hand by open terror, nor, on the other, betrayed into a mean compromise of his honour by secret influence and corruption. Even the love of popular fame itself, the most seductive of all passions, and which will eventually be the means of handing down his name to immortal renown, cannot seduce him from the straight forward path of sincerity and

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integrity; for he will learn to separate the dross from the ore, and to set a proper value upon that praise which is obtained without desert, and bestowed without judgment. To watch over the public interests, to do every thing he can to promote its good by his talents, his wealth, and his virtue, is his constant aim. All other passions are here swallowed up. The love of ease and pleasure hang loosely about him, and even the tender affections which result from the relations of private life, together with life itself, are bravely sacrificed when put in competition with the rights and happiness of our country.

Another principle respecting the nature and government of the passions is, that the name of virtue is given to that state of mind which results from keeping all our passions, both public and private, in due subordination to each other, so that each passion may just perform its part and no more. It must appear evident to those who rightly consider man's situation in the universe, that he could not long exist without paying some attention to the regulation of his passions. By attending to the gratification of those propensities which have for their object the present good or present pleasure of the individual; to be guided by and entirely under the

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control of what immediately administers to the sensual feelings of our capricious appetites; to let revenge and resentment run riot for every trifling wrong done us; and to stifle the voice of pity, friendship, natural affection, and benevolence, would be a course entirely subversive of all society and good order, and ultimately destructive of even our own happiness and life. On the other hand, to pay exclusive attention to the public passions; to smother the tender and social feelings of the soul, and despise and trample upon all the duties and obligations which result from individual connexions; to forget all those things necessarily and immediately connected with our own dignity, worth, and importance,—is to act the part of the political fanatic, instead of the sober citizen; to bring ruin and confusion upon our country, instead of upholding its honour and greatness.

When any one passion, or class of passions, is too weak or too strong, we are led to pronounce that there must be some defect in the moral constitution of the individual. Where, for example, the fear of danger, and the compassion for others' distress, arise to such a height as to make us at all times so tremblingly alive, in the one case to our own safety, and in the other to every little portion of misery which

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may arrest our attention, we shall never be able to achieve any thing of importance in the world, nor to pay that share of attention to those duties which a state of social life imposes upon us. Our happiness will also suffer in a proportionable degree with the over-excitement of these passions and affections. The idea of danger being always present to the mind, enervates it, and renders it unhappy and peevish; and as misery and unhappiness are to be found in all places and stations of life, no small part of the comfort of existence depends upon our having those affections which cause us to sympathize with the distresses of others, well tempered and duly regulated by reason and prudence. But on the other hand, we ought not to run into the opposite extreme, that of showing at all times an indifference and neglect to the evils which others endure, or to be insensible to personal dangers in the discharge of duties which call upon us to sacrifice a portion of our ease, comfort, and individual security. This would be to overact our part, to stretch our passions beyond the proper pitch and tenor. The one line of conduct leads us to act a cruel and unfeeling part towards our fellow-men; and the other to plunge us into serious and unnecessary dangers, and to bring upon our heads all the evils

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of fool-hardiness, rashness, and obstinacy. "Upon the whole," as Lord Shaftesbury justly remarks, "it may be said properly to be the same with the affections or passions in an animal constitution, as with the cords or strings of a musical instrument. Of these, though in ever so just proportion one to another, one strained beyond a certain degree, it is more than the instrument will bear. The lute or lyre is abused, and its effect lost. On the other hand, if, while some of the strings are duly strained, others are not bound up to their due proportion, then is the instrument still in disorder, and its part ill performed. The several species of creatures are like different sorts of instruments; and even in the same species of creatures, (as in the same sort of instrument) *one* is not entirely like the other, nor will the same strings fit each. The same degree of strength which winds up *one*, and fits the several strings to a just harmony and concert, may, in *another*, burst both the strings and instrument itself. Thus men who have the liveliest sense, and are the easiest affected with pain or pleasure, have need of the strongest influence, or force of other affections, such as tenderness, love, sociableness, compassion, in order to preserve a *right balance within*, and to maintain them in their duty,

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and in the just performance of their part; whilst others who are of a cooler blood, or lower key, need not the same alloy or counterpart, nor are made by nature to feel those tender and endearing affections in so exquisite a degree."*

It is curious, and at the same time instructive, to observe the different counter-workings and opposite tendencies of the passions, and the wholesome effects which follow from this opposition. Pity, or the compassion we feel for the distresses of others, which we have just now noticed, how admirably is it calculated to arouse us from a state of indolence and sloth, and to make us set the love of pleasure, of ease, and even of life itself, at a comparatively trfling value. Anger and revenge, as we have already hinted, are not without their use, as they are calculated to prevent a weak and effeminate compassion, and to induce us to bear labour and pain with a becoming portion of firmness and patience. Passions of the same class often act and re-act upon one another, so as to neutralize their individual effects. Thus, the dread of immediate danger or pain operates as a check on revenge and resentment; whilst, on the contrary, fear itself

* Characteristics, vol. ii. p. 95.

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is frequently controlled, when the individual feels great indignation for the wrongs which have been inflicted upon him. In like manner, the private and public affections are placed against each other, as Hutcheson has beautifully observed, in order to moderate and limit each other's influence, and produce a proper balance on the whole. "Thus," as another moral writer justly observes, "most part, if not all the passions, have a two-fold aspect, and serve a two-fold end. In one view, they may be considered as powers impelling mankind to a certain course, with a force proportioned to the apprehended amount of the good they aim at; in another view, they appear as weights, balancing the actions of the powers, and controlling the violence of their impulses. By means of these powers and weights, a natural poise is settled in the human breast by its all-wise author, by which the creature is kept tolerably steady in his course, amidst the variety of stages through which he must pass." And we find the same ideas respecting the balancing of the passions, in Shaftesbury, who observes that "Whoever is the least versed in this moral kind of architecture, will find the inward *fabric* so adjusted, and the whole so nicely built, that the barely extending of a single passion a little too far, or the continu-

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ance of it too long, is able to bring irrecoverable ruin and misery. He will find this experienced in the ordinary case of phrenzy or distraction, when the mind, dwelling too long upon *one* subject, (whether prosperous or calamitous,) sinks under the weight of it, and proves what the necessity is of a due *balance* and counterpoise in the affections. He will find, that in every different creature and distinct sex, there is a different and distinct *order*, *set*, or *suit* of passions, proportionable to the different functions and capacities assigned to each. As the operations and effects are different, so are the springs and causes in each system. The inside work is fitted to the outward action and performance, so that, where habits and affections are dislodged, misplaced, or changed; where those belonging to one species are intermixed with those belonging to another, there must, of necessity, be confusion and disturbance within."

It must appear evident that no one passion is intended to act by itself, but only in conjunction with others to which it bears a certain necessary relation. Nor can any one passion be called useless or sinful, since every one, as we have already noticed, has its part to perform, and the tendency on the whole is to produce a given portion of benefit and

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good to the human economy or state. It cannot, however, be denied, that some inferences may be drawn from this doctrine, which seem rather at variance with some popular doctrines of theology. But to reconcile or remove these difficulties is a duty which devolves upon the metaphysical theologian rather than upon the moralist; since the doctrine that all our passions tend to produce a certain end or object, which, all things considered, is beneficial, is of ancient date, and has never been seriously denied by any writer of consequence. In one point of view, indeed, this doctrine may be considered as highly illustrative of the general principles of natural religion; inasmuch as it teaches us that all the moral affections and passions of men are fitted to the various stages of his progressive existence; they harmonise wonderfully with his physical and intellectual condition; and in every light in which they can be viewed, furnish incontestible proofs of that order, wisdom, and beneficence, the attributes of an all-powerful and wise governor of the universe. Nor can the effects produced from considering the economy of the passions under this point of view be other than beneficial; for the admiration of beauty, the love of order, and the complacency we feel when we perceive every thing adjusted

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to its proper aid and use, and calculated to raise our religious feelings to the highest pitch, and to give us the noblest ideas of Him who is the sum and substance of all perfection. Dr. Hutcheson, in speaking on this subject, remarks, " It will be observed how admirably our affections are contrived for good on the whole. Many of them, indeed, do not pursue the private good of the agent, nay, many of them, in various cases, seem to tend to his detriment, by concerning him violently in the fortunes of others, in their adversity as well as in their prosperity. But they all aim at good, either private or public, and by them each particular agent is made, in a great measure, subservient to the good of the whole. Mankind are thus insensibly linked together, and make one great system by an invisible union. He who voluntarily continues in this union, and delights in employing his power for his kind, makes himself happy; he who does not continue this union makes himself wretched; nor yet can he break the bonds of nature. His public sense, his love of honour, and the very necessities of his nature, will continue to make him depend upon this system, and engage him to serve it whether he inclines to do it or not. Thus we are formed with a view to a general good end, and may in our own

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nature discern a universal mind watchful for the whole.

What are generally denominated passions cannot be considered as different *in kind* from desires or aversions, wishes, or apprehensions; for passions are only these various affections of our moral constitution excited in a more violent degree. It is this strong excitement which constitutes the peculiar nature of passion in general. And in a treatise on the passions it may be proper to make a few remarks upon the effects which passions of different kinds have upon our bodies. They operate upon our frames sometimes slowly and sometimes quickly, and we have frequently witnessed sudden death from the latter mode, and a slow decline and wasting consumption from the former. The passions may be viewed in relation to their effects upon the body, as forming two kinds, the agreeable and the disagreeable; those which exercise a friendly influence over the body, and those which impair and consume its vital energies. Joy enlivens and animates the whole frame; the eyes sparkle; the action of the arterial system is greatly increased; the circulation of the fluids is more regular, and diseases of every kind are less liable to affect us when under the transporting influences of this exhilarat-

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ing passion. Love, when viewed in a proper light, may be said to be a continuation of joy, and is generally attended with the general effects of that passion. Love has frequently been known to exercise the most wonderful effects in curing diseases; and a strong attachment to a beloved object, when attended with success, has been frequently known to exert a healing effect over inveterate complaints, when all medicinal prescriptions have proved ineffectual. The extraordinary exertions both of body and mind which the true lover makes for the attainment of his object, manifest to us the additional strength and vigour which are imparted to his frame by this natural passion. Even the milder affection, if we may thus term it, of hope, exercises a wonderfully salutary effect over our animal economy, and its moderately exhilarating influence becomes highly beneficial to the healthy and vigorous exercise of all the bodily functions.

"Auspicious Hope! in thy sweet garden grow
Wreaths for each toil, a charm for every woe;
Won by their sweets, in nature's languid hour,
The way-worn pilgrim seeks thy summer bower;
There, as the wild bee murmurs on the wing,
What peaceful dreams thy handmaid spirits bring!
What viewless forms the Æolian organ play,
And sweep the furrow'd lines of anxious thought away."*

* Campbell's Pleasures of Hope.

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On the other hand, the disagreeable passions exercise a very striking and unfriendly influence upon the body. *Fear*, or the apprehension of bodily or mental evil, weakens the powers of the mind, relaxes and congeals every part of our structure, impedes the pulsation, affects respiration, and produces tremors and dread, and a complete disorganization of the whole man, both physically and mentally. *Terror*, which seems to be fear only carried to a higher pitch, is of all human passions the most immediately and alarmingly destructive, and, besides, it is at the same time the most difficult to avoid, as it comes upon us usually without note or preparation. Its physical effects are commonly a sudden and violent contraction of the muscles, more especially those which are more directly under the influence of the will or voluntary powers,—the blood is driven violently from the external to the internal parts; and, in consequence, a general derangement of the whole system takes place. It has been stated, upon respectable medical authority, that instances have happened when *terror* has had such an effect upon the individual that the hair on his head has been instantaneously turned into a grey colour. *Anger* exhibits itself in different ways according to its degree; and also as it happens to be connected either

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with fear or revenge. If it be allied to fear, it is productive of spasmodic stagnations in the liver and its vessels, paleness of the face, and increased pulsation of the heart; a faltering in the tongue, a trembling in the limbs, and a jaundiced discoloration of the whole skin. On the contrary, if anger be connected with a desire and thirst for revenge, the whole frame is then put into violent commotion; the circulation of the arterial system is greatly increased; the vital energy is much augmented; the muscular parts seem to have received a great accession of strength; the eyes sparkle, the face reddens, and the whole man feels himself elated to a wonderful degree, and fit to cope with any difficulties. *Sorrow*, with its modifications, *grief* and *despair*, like a slow poison, waste and corrode the vital powers of both mind and body. The nervous system gets speedily deranged; the heart beats slower, and the whole circulation becomes languid and feeble, under the influence of these depressing passions. The effects of disappointment and sudden grief upon the stomach is very remarkable. You see a stout healthy man with an appetite keen with the bracing effects of out-door exercise, sit down to a meal; but just as he is about to regale himself, a letter is put into his hand announcing to him the

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death of his wife, or some other dear relation or friend, in whom all his affections and hopes were centred. In a moment his appetite vanishes; the bite is rolled about in his mouth with sickening satiety, and he can scarcely, by the utmost effort, succeed in swallowing the smallest particle.

But the agreeable and disagreeable passions point out the close and intimate union which subsists between the mind and the body. Of the nature of this union or connexion we know nothing; all that we can infer is, that the passions sometimes take their rise from the body, and sometimes from the mind. It is obviously from a physical cause that anger and rage, timidity and fear, follow from the taking of strong medicines, poisons, or from the bite of mad animals; and that a too great accumulation of bile makes people shy, peevish, melancholy, fickle, and discontented. On the other hand, passions are frequently excited without any apparently bodily cause, and seem to result from purely mental operations. But man is a being subjected to such a constant influence from external objects, that it becomes utterly impossible to define accurately, in the generality of cases, what may be fairly attributed to a physical, and what to a mental cause.

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Our various passions may be said to be the origin of what we term natural language, or that medium by which we carry on a correspondence with our species through the expressions of the countenance, and the gestures of the body. These expressions and gestures speak with more force and truth than any conversational terms. They are never mistaken; they never deceive us. They become the sure and unerring symbols of what is passing in the heart of man. When he is actuated with passion, and feels strongly on a subject, he accompanies his verbal language with various significant gestures. He points out places with his fingers, he raises his hands when impressed with adoration or awe, he clenches his fist, and draws in his elbows, when menacing an attack or revenge; and the easy and unrestrained extension of his arms, is indicative of friendship and peace. The movements of the head are numerous, and the various expressions which the muscles of the face assume, when under the influence of the malevolent and angry passions, are very marked and striking; while the pleasing and engaging countenance which betokens the presence of joy, happiness, and contentment, call forth our sympathy and regard. The supplicating seriousness of grief, the scowling haugh-

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tiness of supercilious authority; the coarse and boisterous clangour of revelry and merriment, with groans, hisses, and shouts, are all indicative of certain kinds, degrees, and states of passion.

It is from paying a close attention to those outward visible signs of the wishes, passions, and desires of men, that people are able to carry on a mutual interchange of sentiment and opinion. And it seldom happens that there is any misunderstanding amongst the parties as to the proper meaning and application of these expressions and gestures.

Every passion, emotion, and desire is strikingly pourtrayed in the expressions of the countenance, and the knowledge of these outward manifestations of the inward feelings, is the foundation of the arts of painting and sculpture, &c. "In anger and resentment, the forehead is contracted, the eye-brows are drawn towards each other, and the lips are somewhat thrust out; under the influence of fear, especially when in a great degree, the forehead and eye-brows are raised upwards; grief or sorrow causes them to assume a lowering appearance, and the cheeks to hang down; the emotion of joy, on the other hand, expands them, but contracts the cheeks, and draws up the corners of the mouth. How wonderfully eloquent, again, are the eyes!

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By them alone, in reality, all the passions of the soul are expressed with a velocity, an intensity, and a correctness, which no artificial language can accomplish. We readily discover a person's intention and his feeling towards us, by what we call his *looks;* or in other words, the expression of his eyes; and it is to these, much more than to any spoken words, that we have recourse, on the most ordinary occurrences, in order to determine any changes of mind which may have taken place among our companions. In speaking upon pleasant and delightful subjects, the eyes are brisk and cheerful; as, on the contrary, they sink, and are languid, in delivering anything melancholy and sorrowful. This is so agreeable to nature, that, before a person speaks, we are prepared with the expectation of one or the other from his different aspect. So likewise in anger a certain vehemence and intenseness appears in the eyes, which, for *want of proper words* to express it by, we endeavour to represent by metaphors taken from fire, the most violent and rapid element, and say in such cases, the eyes *burn, sparkle,* or are *inflamed.* In expressions of hatred or detestation, it is natural to alter the look, either by turning the eyes aside or downwards."* In de-

* Ward's System of Oratory.

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signing and cunning selfishness, the eyes are contracted inwards, and nearly the same sign is considered by *Hudibras* as indicative of religious fanaticism and hypocrisy.

> "As men of inward light are wont,
> To turn their optics in upon't."

We must draw these remarks on the external signs of our passions to a close, though they might be greatly extended; and confine ourselves to a few observations on the Doctor's treatise On "*The Passions.*" The main end for which it seems to have been composed, was to furnish additional confirmation of his favourite doctrine—that of a moral sense. It may be laid down as a principle, tacitly recognised by the general tenor of this book of the Doctor's, that wherever there is *passion* there must be a *moral sense.* If we look carefully through the writings of our most celebrated moralists, upon this disputed point of a moral sense, we will perceive, that they have generally passed over the passions in a hasty manner, and have considered them as little calculated to throw any additional light either on the one side of the controversy or on the other. They have disputed about *when* and in *what manner* we came by our notions of right and

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wrong, without ever taking any particular notice of these sudden and violent emotions of our frame called passions, which are purely the external symbols or indexes of these very notions of right and wrong. Our notions of virtue and vice, seem always to be in their writings, something very different in their nature from the passions, which we are led to consider as instinctive affections. Now if we define a *moral sense* to what Shaftesbury, Dr. Hutcheson and others, I feel confident, always looked upon it to be, *only a susceptibility of moral emotion*, may we not take upon us to ask, in what respects this moral susceptibility of emotion differs from the passions? If the moral emotion be independent of the passions, it may be exercised without any connexion with them—but is this the case? Can we have a notion, that we ourselves or others have suffered a great and unmerited injury, without feeling some portion of indignation against the authors of the mischief? Can we have an idea of one, in whose welfare we take a deep interest, labouring under great evils and privations, without feeling the emotion of compassion in our breasts? Man, constituted as he is in other respects, could never be considered as a moral agent, were he destitute of passion; for if he had any notions of virtue and vice,

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they could never be recognised for want of the passions, which are the external signs of these notions. In fact, it will be found upon careful examination, that this susceptibility of moral emotion, called a *sense, does not differ in kind from the passions;* and therefore, as these passions are allowed to be purely instinctive in their essence, the *moral sense,* contended for by Dr. Hutcheson and others, must be allowed a participation in the same instinctive nature.

Dr. Hutcheson has a very fine chapter in his book on the passions, on the management of our desires, and of the best means of promoting our happiness. But to enter here into the question, what degree of influence the will has over our various passions and desires, would only be to anticipate what will have to be advanced when we come to examine some other treatises on morals.

Besides the treatises already mentioned, Dr. Hutcheson was the author of a "System of Moral Philosophy," which was published after his death by his son. The first part of this work is of a metaphysical nature; and the author endeavours to unfold the several laws of the human mind, in connexion with our moral constitution; and by this means, to trace the origin of our ideas of moral

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obligation or duty. In the second and third parts, the particular laws of our constitution which are necessary for promoting the prosperity and happiness of a community, as well as to render easy and comfortable our intercourse with each other, are treated of at considerable length. Throughout the whole work, the author endeavours to establish the great doctrine of a *moral sense.*

We will here conclude this chapter, by barely remarking, that Dr. Hutcheson's station as a moral philosopher is lofty and conspicuous; he forms a land-mark of considerable utility to the moral student. Though by no means the first who suggested the doctrine of a moral sense, yet he certainly took the lead in collecting and modelling into a system the scattered observations of others upon the subject. His name is a tower of strength to the admirers and supporters of this doctrine. He has said all which can possibly be advanced for his favourite system; and those who may peruse his writings will find a copious abundance of useful and instructive informatiom. His works, however, are somewhat dry and tedious, arising in a great measure from his extreme subtilty. He informs us that he borrowed the leading ideas of all his treatises, from Shaftesbury; but he

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falls considerably short of that sparkling vivacity and perspicuity of expression, which succeed in exciting and riveting the attention to the moral writings of the author of the " Characteristics."

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CHAPTER XVII.

MR. THOMAS RUTHERFORD.

AN ESSAY ON VIRTUE.

THOMAS RUTHERFORD was born at Papsworth, Everherd, in Cambridgeshire, in 1712. Having passed through the elementary parts of education, he was entered at St. John's College, Cambridge, where he took his degrees, and obtained a fellowship in the College. He was afterwards appointed regius Professor of Divinity in the University, and created D. D. He was chosen to be Chaplain to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, shortly after this. In the Church he was rector of Barley, in Hertfordshire, and in Shenfield in Essex; and made an archdeacon also. He died in Oc-

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tober 1771, having nearly completed his 59th year.

Mr. Rutherford's "Essay on the Nature and Obligations of Virtue" is, I believe, but little known amongst the readers of moral publications. It is, however, well worthy of a careful perusal. The views of the author are unfolded with much energy and precision; and those great faults amongst the more theoretic writers which preceded him,—of affected obscurity, and abstruse distinctions, are in a great measure avoided.

Mr. Rutherford combats the opinion of Mr. Wollaston, Dr. Clarke, and others, that virtue consists in acting agreeably to truth, or treating things as being what they really are. If virtue were to consist in acting merely in conformity with the nature of things, then it would clearly follow, that *fitness*, abstractly considered, would be, in all cases, a sure measure or standard of virtue and vice; and, accordingly, we would find, that if *fitness of application*, made virtue, and the contrary vice, then many things which are naturally fit to be done would be invested with the qualities of virtue and vice. Drinking out of a glass would not constitute

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that action a virtuous one; nor breaking the glass a vicious one. And again, there is a very natural *fitness* or propriety of a person applying force at the long end of a lever, in order to raise a weight, but there is no virtue in this; nor is there any thing which we could properly denominate vice, if he were to disregard natural fitness, and apply his strength at the short end of the lever, with a hope of accomplishing the same end. There would be an evident misapplication of means,—a total disregard of the fitness of things in acting in accordance with the latter supposition; but there would be nothing which could clothe the action with moral criminality. We must therefore look out for some other rule, by which we are to determine what is virtuous and what is vicious. We want a mark to point out to us those relations amongst various things, which it becomes virtue to act in conformity to, and vice to act against; and also those relations which are connected with actions perfectly indifferent. This mark or standard must therefore be determined from observations made upon those relations amongst the actions and consequences of living beings which effect their comfort and happiness. What constitutes any unfitness a *moral unfitness*, is, that it is capable of producing unhappiness and misery; and

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what makes, in like manner, a *moral fitness*, is that which is calculated to advance our happiness, and secure our well-being.

Let the question be considered in every possible light, we will always find, that the notion of virtue must consist in something more than in mere fitness of application. But let us take, for example, those duties of a moral kind, which a man owes to himself. Here fitness of application is nothing more than fitness of action; because a man must necessarily act in conformity to his nature and constitution, when he uses his powers and faculties in a proper manner; and nothing can here constitute an unfitness of application but a disagreement between the action and the nature, or circumstances of him who does it. We disapprove of the conduct of the sensualist, and pronounce his conduct contrary to the order or fitness of things; because we say it is contrary to the character of man. But we may again ask, how is that character to be estimated, and by what moral standard is it to be tried? If from the man himself, then he plainly acts up to it; and if we look to the notions which the generality of mankind entertain on such conduct as his, we may be led to see, that the standard here is variable and unsatisfactory.

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Why do we dislike and reprobate the man of pleasure? Because his course of life diverts his attention from that which is calculated to promote the welfare of his fellow-creatures, and leads him into a path of life destructive to his own, as well as to others' happiness. Why do we condemn the drunkard? Is it merely because his intemperate habits invariably shorten his days, and render his life miserable? Certainly not; these are some of the reasons why we pronounce his conduct to be immoral, but not the sole and only ones. For, if this were the case, if the mere relation which is established in the nature and constitution of things between intemperance in drinking and destruction of domestic comfort and life were to be the standard of virtue, then it would clearly follow, that the men whose health and life were sacrificed to some useful occupation, and the soldier, who rushed into the battle for the good of his country, would also be acting a vicious part. What makes all the difference between the drunkard and the two last cases is, that the workmen and the soldier suffer for the real and lasting good of mankind; while the sot can advance no such plea of justification, for his whole life is one continued outrage to decency and propriety; and, instead of doing good, he is perpetually engaged in

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transactions which have a certain and direct tendency to efface from human nature every vestige of morality. It is entirely upon this principle that we reason and judge in such cases as we have here supposed. The benefit or injury is always taken into account; and our praise or blame is always meted out in strict accordance with the amount of happiness or misery which is the result of any particular line of moral conduct.

It may possibly be objected, that this is not a satisfactory method of showing what virtue really is; for it is not only necessary that that kind of behaviour which has the name of virtue be pointed out, but it is requisite to show what has the *nature* or *essence* of virtue; not what is termed, but what is really virtue in the abstract. The reality of moral distinctions is as amply and firmly secured upon the theory of utility as upon any other hypothesis. The general terms *virtue* and *vice* are given to two different kinds of actions, and are made to stand for the two different qualities, by which these qualities are characterised; and nothing more is required to make us well acquainted with what *virtue* and *vice* are in their own nature, than to know the qualities attached to these two separate sets of actions. It is perfectly true, that the mere words virtue and

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vice are purely arbitrary and conventional terms; but we are not to infer from this, that the ideas they represent are uncertain and variable; on the contrary, we see clearly that the Author of Nature, who has made things as they really are, has constituted one kind of behaviour different from another, and has made some moral actions fitted to produce good or happiness, and others to produce evil and misery. If murder or drunkenness do harm, calling either by the name of virtue will not make them less harmless, because giving the name does not invest either action with the quality or attribute of virtue. And, in like manner, if chastity is found to be useful and beneficial to mankind; and if all mankind were, by common consent, to agree that it was no virtue, they could only strip it of its title; they could not change its beneficial qualities.

Many of the disputes in moral philosophy may be traced to the variable meanings which are given to the words *moral good, moral agent,* and *moral obligation.* The whole of moral science is only that branch of philosophy which *lays down rules for the regulation of our conduct;* and the nature and utility of this science do not rest upon what may be termed pure demonstration, but upon probable evidence and analogical reasoning. We are

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induced to follow certain kinds of behaviour from probable evidence alone; we eat and drink without being able demonstratively to prove that we will be refreshed and strengthened by this act; we engage in all our business affairs, with a hope that they will turn out to our expectations, but without being directed by the same path of demonstration. These few remarks will enable us to determine what is meant by several phrases in common use, both with the learned and the unlearned. *Moral good* generally signifies that which is of *use* or *advantage* to others. This is its familiar meaning. Thus we say, that an estate is a *good estate*, if the owner receives considerable benefit from it; and a house is said to be a *good house*, when its structure and conveniences administer to the happiness and comfort of its occupant. These are properly called *natural good*. By *moral good*, we mean precisely the same thing so far as the *end* is concerned; we only differ in the sense of the phrase as far as the *means* are employed. That which by *necessity of its nature*, or without *will*, *intelligence*, or *design*, produces good, is called *natural good*; but that good which is produced by an *active agent* possessing will and understanding, is said to be *moral good*. This is the reason why an action is called a

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morally good action; and the phrase involves two distinct ideas, freeness and design in the agent, and the tendency of the action to produce benefit or good to the agent or to others. By a moral man, we mean a man whose behaviour is calculated to make himself, as well as others, happy. The definition which has here been attempted, of what is usually meant by *moral good*, is in some measure explanatory of the term *moral agent*. No being can be said to be morally good that is not supposed to have the power within himself of both doing good and ill. There must be a spontaneous act of will before an action can be invested with moral responsibility, or be liable to censure or praise. There must be a sense of duty joined to the power of a settled intention or design. What makes the difference between the inferior creation and man? what is it that clothes the behaviour of the latter with moral validity, and induces us to use the language of approbation when his actions are productive of good, and disapprobation when they produce harm; and yet which induces us to give neither praise nor blame to irrational creatures, though the actions they do may be productive of as much benefit to us as those of our own kind? It is liberty of action. And let the question be viewed

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in every light it is possible to view it, *we will find that a moral agent means one that has liberty of action, and is capable of acting with design and under a sense of duty.* The term *moral obligation,* in its extended sense, is perfectly consistent with choice or liberty of action, and cannot be separated from it. We never apply moral obligation to any thing or agent where necessity or compulsion is understood; moral obligation must mean that which is the best and most proper behaviour in all conditions, and this becomes the universal reason for practising it.

From an examination of the ordinary feelings and sympathies of mankind, as well as of our external senses or powers of perception, it is clearly apparent that they have all a strong tendency to promote our comfort and secure our existence; and from this consideration, it has been supposed by some moralists that we have an instinctive power or feeling of doing good, similar to our bodily senses, which has generally been denominated a *moral sense,* and which has virtue for its object, and gives a disinterested approval of all her dictates. But upon mature consideration it will be found that we cannot be said to have virtue from any such instinctive feeling. Are we not fondest

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of virtue when we experience its benefits, when we find it in a friend or a neighbour, where we are likely to experience its beneficial effects? And in like manner, would not evil at the hand of a friend be more severely felt, as we should then be under a greater load of affliction?

The true source of moral obligation must be that which gives us an undoubted assurance, that by being virtuous we shall not fail to be happy. For whether we follow virtue as she manifests her operations in the general behaviour of mankind, or attend to the dictates of reason as they are unfolded in the writings of philosophers, we will not fail to perceive that our own happiness is always what we aim at, and that which we invariably profess at least to pursue with steadiness and constancy. If virtue had no relation to this end, no tendency to promote our comfort, it would cease to have any importance in our eyes. But this cannot be; virtue can never be indifferent to us, and will always remain distinct from vice; and that conduct which is productive of good to mankind will not only always maintain a distinctive character from that which is productive of misery and ruin, but will be the best for those who follow it, even though they should occasionally feel distress.

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But there is great reluctance in all mankind to confess that they act from pure selfishness. While we are pursuing any object with ardour, we are anxious to keep out of view that it is for the purpose of making ourselves happy that we wish to obtain it. It is not till a man becomes possessed of more enlarged views of moral duty that he will openly and explicitly avow the doctrine, that private and public utility are the foundations of all true morality. He must thoroughly understand that the real good of every particular individual is by some means or other connected with the good and happiness of all mankind; and that by taking the proper and lawful steps of promoting our own welfare and comfort, we are at the same time doing what is best calculated to advance the best interests of our brethren of mankind.

Every man's happiness then, becomes the final or ultimate end which reason teaches him to pursue. For it will be found that the genuine dictates of nature cannot differ from those of right reason, for the latter will approve what the former suggests. Reason only points out the final end of an action as a motive for performing it, and this end is that which is, all things considered, the most desirable; and this is nothing more nor less than to

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affirm that such and such a thing is productive of happiness. We may here appeal to the opinions of the wisest of the heathen philosophers, as to what they meant by the *voice of reason*. They invariably considered it as synonymous with that which was instrumental to happiness. In that controversy which gave rise to an almost infinite fund of discussion, and divided them into different sects or parties, namely, *where the sovereign good was to be found, and what was that in which the happiness of man principally consisted;* we may clearly perceive the universality of this opinion as to the nature of virtue. Whatever disputes raged amongst the ancients as to the line of conduct which was best calculated to produce happiness, and to avoid the least portion of evil—whether we look to those who talked about the sublimity of virtue in the abstract, or those who descanted on the pleasure derivable from a prudent and temperate management of the appetites and passions, yet will we perceive that *good* of some kind or degree was what they considered as the final end of all virtuous action, and the reason it became obligatory on mankind to perform it.

But, though every man's happiness be the ultimate end or reason why he should act in conformity with virtuous principles, yet we must bear in mind

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that man is but an imperfect and short-sighted creature; and, on this account, he requires a guide to point out to him what is really calculated to promote his permanent happiness. Now, it will be found, that there is no real happiness in the mere act of virtue, independent of the word of God, and the dispensations of his Providence. It is agreed, that the good of each individual is the ultimate end of virtue; but the most interesting question is, *where will he find this good?* Nature and reason bid him pursue it; but is either sufficient to direct him to it? If these prove but frail guides; if they only prompt to happiness, without giving the requisite information how and where true happiness is to be found, we will have to apply to some other course for this important information. The state of morality in the heathen world is sufficient to convince us, that man cannot find out the happy course of conduct, if left entirely to himself. *Epicurus* bids him look for happiness in the pursuit of pleasure; *Hieronymus* cautions him to avoid pain; the Stoics tell him to follow nature; and the Peripatetics enjoin him to adhere steadily to virtue, which consists in securing as many of the advantages of body and of fortune as can be properly procured. Here we perceive a great contrariety of opinion, but all these

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different schemes for happiness do pointedly show, that the framers of them had no infallible standard of good and evil, by which to regulate their conduct. This standard can only be found in the will and appointments of our Creator. There are no natural affections of virtue implanted in human nature sufficiently strong to be invariably and exclusively depended upon; there is no intrinsic or peculiar fitness in virtue which can render it an object of our esteem or affection; neither nature nor reason will make a man steadily pursue any thing but his own immediate good; nor does the final happiness of mankind, either in this life, or in that which is to come, depend upon the sole efficiency of virtue, considered in itself. We must, therefore, have recourse to the belief in a Deity, and superintending Providence; taking the Scriptures as our foundation of duty, and of our hopes of future felicity. All true principles of moral obligation lie hid from the natural powers of the atheist or the fatalist, from them who think in their heart *there is no God*, and those who strive to make themselves happy independent of the Deity's immediate assistance.

The great dispute amongst the various parties who have written on morality has been, what was the obliging cause of duty? Now, we maintain,

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that the uniform practice of virtue towards all mankind becomes our duty when revelation has informed us that God will make us finally happy for it in another life. All moral motives become weak and inefficient when our happiness is kept out of view; and our constitution is such, and God has made it such, that without a prospect of advantage, we are unable to be moved by any thing. Even the authority of the Almighty will have little weight where our compliance with it does not forward the pursuit of our happiness; for the source of moral obligation is not so much his will to have us to deserve it, as it is his will to make us happy. If we look at the principles of natural religion alone, we will find that they are of themselves inadequate to enforce the truth on our minds, that a constant and universal practice of virtue will appear to be agreeable to nature and reason; we must, therefore, look for the true source of all moral obligation *in the revealed will of God;* where it is plainly and forcibly laid down, that virtue becomes our duty, because the Almighty has expressly promised to reward all those in another and happier state of existence, who diligently seek him in this.

Seeking, therefore, in the book of Revelation for the only efficient and certain obligation to virtue,

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we may divide it into three leading divisions. First, That law, and those promises which were given to man before the promulgation of the laws of Moses. Secondly, That part of revelation which embraces that portion of the history of the Jews while the law existed in full force. And, thirdly, Christianity after the Mosaic ritual was abrogated. On all these points it will be our intention to show, that obedience to virtue, or the will of God, was enforced by the promises of happiness in a future life.

First, The penalty which was inflicted upon our first parents for eating of the forbidden fruit was the loss of immortality. St. Paul observes that *we* shall all be made alive in Christ, as we all died in Adam; and that the life which is to be restored to man, by the vicarious sufferings of Christ, is precisely of the same nature as that which we lost by the fall. But man did not only lose eternal life by his disobedience, but he also forfeited his true happiness, and was condemned to labour and sorrow. The sentence passed upon him was, "*Cursed is the ground for thy sake, in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return into the ground;*

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for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." There were other evils besides these now enumerated, entailed upon our posterity; but these are sufficient to show that happiness, the ultimate end which reason and nature prompt us to pursue, was far removed out of our reach; that great uncertainty prevailed as to what it really was, and where to be found; and, in consequence, the performance of virtue became precarious, and made to rest upon uncertain and inadequate motives.

But, immediately after the fall, a promise was given by God to our first parents, that the immortal life and perfect happiness, which they had lost, should, at some remote period, be restored to their race; and this covenant was formally renewed to the patriarch Abraham. The first notice which the Almighty gave of himself to the father of the faithful was by "calling him from his own country and family, with a promise that he would make of him a great nation; would bless him; would make his name great, and he should be a blessing; that he would bless those who should bless him, and curse those who should curse him; and that in him all the families of the earth should be blessed."*

* Gen. i. 12. Sherlock on Prophecies.

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Secondly, Under the Mosiac dispensation, obedience to the will of God was enforced by the hopes of a future life, as well as by the promise of temporal happiness. From the time of the patriarch Jacob until the appearing of Moses, we have no account of any additional revelation which was made to mankind in general, or to any particular nation or family. But when the Israelites returned from captivity, and were about to take possession of the promised land, it pleased God to give them a law by his servant Moses, which was intended to keep them distinct from all the rest of the world. By this law, however, neither the religion of the patriarchs, nor the particular promises made to them, were superseded. On the contrary, if we look into the law itself, we will find that the covenant made to Abraham was expressly made of that sanction by which obedience was enforced under the Mosaic dispensation. "*Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God; your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, with all the men of Israel; your little ones, your wives, and the stranger that is in thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood, unto the drawer of thy water; that thou shouldest enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath, which the Lord thy*

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God maketh with thee this day; that he may establish thee to-day for a people unto himself, and that he may be unto thee a God, as he hath said unto thee, and as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob."* Whatever, therefore, was contained in the patriarchal covenant, was promised in the law; and in whatever manner God had sworn to be a God to Abraham, and to his seed after him; in the same manner, he engaged to be a God to the Israelites, as long as they continued obedient to his commands. And if we attend to the matter dispassionately, and interpret the promises of life and happiness that were made in the land, so as to make these promises intelligible, and consonant with themselves, and with the event; and if we follow the authority of our Saviour and his apostles in interpreting them; we shall find, that those who lived under the Mosaic dispensation, had the hopes of a future state given them, to enforce their obedience to the will of God.

Thirdly, Christianity completes the patriarchal religion, and promises the happiness of another life, upon easier conditions than the law of Moses had

* Deut. xxix. 5-10.

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promised it. The Christian dispensation is the revelation of God's will to mankind; and in this the gracious design is completed, which was begun after man's fall, and carried on under the Mosaic law. Our first parents were early informed that God would be reconciled to them, and would restore them and their posterity to perfect happiness and immortal glory; and in this general promise all the descendants of Adam were equally concerned. And it is in this light we are to consider that Christianity is plainly the end and perfection of the patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations. "Thus, at length, *the day-spring from on high has visited* all mankind; *it has given light to the Gentiles, who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, and, by giving knowledge of salvation for the remission of sins, it has guided the feet of the Jews into the ways of peace.* This is the point to which I designed to bring the reader. I have endeavoured to show him, that the events of nature, and the imperfections of reason, have made a revelation necessary, both to teach us how to make ourselves happy, and to oblige us to be virtuous; that God has taught mankind, in every age of the world, to expect their final good in another life, as the reward of their obedience to his will in this; and that the promises of

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all former revelations were so contrived as to make the gospel necessary, and were all of them intended by their author to lead us to Christ."*

We have thus given a short detail of the system which Mr. Rutherford advocates in his "*Essay on Virtue.*" Every reader will see that the principle on which his reasonings are grounded are precisely the same as those on which the doctrine of utility is founded. It is therefore quite unnecessary to make any farther remarks upon Mr. Rutherford's work, except merely to observe, that those who will peruse it, will find in it a vast number of excellent remarks upon some of the moral writers who had preceded him.

Mr. Rutherford was also the author of "*Institutes of Natural and Political Law.*"—This is a work of considerable merit, and is the substance of a course of lectures on *Grotius*, read in St. John's College, Cambridge. This treatise has been referred to by Dr. Paley, and other subsequent moral and political writers.

* Essay on Virtue, p. 384.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

MR. HUME.

THE SYSTEM OF UTILITY.

DAVID HUME was born at Edinburgh, on the 26th of April 1711. His ancestors had, for several generations, been proprietors of a small estate at Ninewells, about five miles east of Dunse, in the county of Berwick. After the preparatory rudiments of a school education, our author was removed to the College of Edinburgh. His friends intended him to follow the profession of the law; but he felt a great and lasting aversion to all kinds of business, and devoted himself industriously to the pursuits of philosophy and general learning. "While," says he, "my friends fancied I was poring upon Voet and Vinnius, Cicero and Virgil were the authors whom I was secretly devouring."

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As Mr. Hume was a younger brother, his patrimony, according to the custom of his country, was very slender; and this, combined with his disinclination to the business of a lawyer, and the representation of his friends, induced him to repair to Bristol, in 1734, with a design to engage in the commercial line. He carried with him letters of introduction to several eminent merchants of that city; but from his confirmed love of literature, or some other cause now unknown, he found himself, in a few months, totally unequal to the bustle incident to his new situation. He therefore abandoned it, and went to France.

It was during his stay in this country, that he completed his treatise on human nature, the plan of which he had formed while at the University of Edinburgh. In the end of the year 1737 he printed and published, in octavo, the two first volumes of his work under the title of a "*Treatise of Human Nature; being an attempt to introduce the experimental method of reasoning into moral subjects.*" This performance met with such a cold and discouraging reception by the public, that the author observes, with great candour, "never literary attempt was more unfortunate than my treatise on human nature. It fell *dead-born* from the press,

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without reaching such distinction as even to excite a murmur among the zealots."

After publishing this work, he repaired to Ninewells, where his mother resided, and he laboured with so much assiduity as to be able to usher into the world, in 1742, two small volumes of "*Essays, Moral and Philosophical.*" These tracts form the first part of those essays now generally collected under his name, and were tolerably received by the public, which in measure consoled him for his former disappointment.

In 1745, Mr. Hume was invited by the Marquis of Annandale to come and reside with him in England, an invitation which was accepted, and our author resided with him for about a twelvemonth. In the following year, Mr Hume was appointed Secretary to General St. Clair, who was appointed to command an expedition to Canada; but the destination of this expedition was altered, and Mr. Hume accompanied the General to the courts of Vienna and Turin, where he familiarized himself with the fashions and manners of the great.

About this time he published his "*Enquiry concerning Human Nature;*" and in 1748, he sent forth a re-publication of his *Essays, Moral and Political;* but, according to the author's own ac-

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count, they were received by the public with as much indifference as some of his preceding literary efforts. His political discourses were published in 1751, and in the same year his "*Enquiry respecting the Principles of Morals*," and his essay on miracles, made their appearance. He was at this period appointed to the office of Librarian to the Faculty of Advocates; a situation which gave him the command of an excellent collection of books, and which, it is supposed, suggested the first idea of becoming a historian.

In 1754, the first volume of his "History of England" was published, and which, he says, was met with but "one cry of reproach, disapprobation, and even detestation" on the part of the public. In the following year, he sent to the press his "*Natural History of Religion*," which excited less attention than he anticipated. In 1759 his "*History of the House of Tudor*" came forth, and in 1761 two more volumes of his work.

Mr. Hume accompanied the Earl of Hereford on his embassy to Paris, where his character as a writer and philosopher procured for him great attention from persons of rank and fashion. He returned to his native country in 1766, and brought the celebrated but eccentric and capricious Rousseau with

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him, to procure him a comfortable asylum from his enemies on the continent; but a rupture soon took place between the French philosopher and our historian, which ended in the former leaving this country in disgust.

In the following year, Mr. Hume appeared again in a public capacity as under-secretary of state, under General Conway, till his resignation in the latter end of 1769. Retiring to Edinburgh, Mr. Hume drew around him a party of agreeable associates, with whom he lived on easy and familiar terms, and by whom he was greatly admired and respected. His health began to decline in 1775; in the following April he drew up a sketch of his own life; and contemplating his approaching dissolution, not only with tranquillity, but with all his habitual gaiety, he died in August of the same year.

No theory of moral action has undergone a more rigid and extended inquiry, than that with which the name of Mr. Hume is now generally connected, namely utility. Since the publication of this celebrated writer's Essays on moral subjects, an almost uninterrupted discussion has been kept up on the merits of the principle on which his views are

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grounded ; and so keen and searching have the disputes been, and so much ability and cleverness have been shewn by the generality of the combatants, that little can now be gleaned from the most careful attention to the subject, which can, in the ordinary interpretation of language, be considered as novel or original. It cannot therefore be expected that I should be able to advance any thing in this essay which may not possibly be found to have been advanced before by some other writer on the system under review. To treat of an almost exhausted topic of philosophical discussion, is no very pleasant or enviable task ; for you are neither cheered in your progress, on the one hand, by the exercise of the ordinary powers of invention, nor, on the other, can you steer altogether clear of the formidable accusation of putting old doctrines in a new form.

A very superficial view of the doctrine of utility, will be sufficient to show that it is founded on principles which possess considerable plausibility, and harmonizes to a very considerable extent with all our common and familiar notions of morality. We seem almost by the force of instinct to descant upon what is useful or hurtful to ourselves or others ; and the whole structure of our language shews how strikingly it is adapted to give full and ready utter-

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ance to our inward opinions and feelings, relative to the security of our existence, or to the promotion of our comfort and happiness. The majority of the moral principles and impulses seem planted in our nature with a direct view of prompting us to means for securing our well-being; and this circumstance gives no small advantage to the moral theory in question. Where sympathy, or benevolence, or fitness, or any other principle which has been the ground-work of a system, is once named in our common conversational language, utility is a hundred times; and this fact, independent of every other consideration, is sufficient to show that Mr. Hume's theory does not altogether rest upon such slender or paradoxical position as some of his opponents have asserted.

Looking at the relative situation of man, in this department of the universe, the place of his habitation, we must readily perceive how naturally he should consider the benefit or utility which accrues to him from certain things and actions, as an object of his warmest applause, and the standard of merit. He comes into the world a weak and helpless creature, unprovided with any thing to administer to his necessities, or to sustain his life. By the care and affectionate resources of his parents he is nurtured

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till his reason and judgment are expanded to the extent requisite for his own guidance. The first lessons he learns, in his infantile state, are to distinguish between what is hurtful and what is salutary; and to steer his infant course with safety amongst the innumerable shoals and quicksands which beset him on every side in the early part of his life. Hunger and thirst, and, indeed, all his bodily sensations, are made known to him by a language so expressive, that it cannot be mistaken; and the various means and objects which are employed to satisfy his wants, and to promote his ease and comfort, form an important part of the infant vocabulary of the mind. We point out to him what is good and what is bad, what is innocent and what is injurious; and he treasures up the notices respecting the qualities of external objects, and the consequences of moral actions, with wonderful accuracy, as elements for the maintenance of his future happiness and well-being. This process, therefore, of education, rendered necessary by the constitution of our being, forms the rudiments or outlines of the theory of utility.

But the necessity of always attending to and speaking of things of a beneficial or injurious nature, is not confined to the period of childhood; but, on the contrary, as we make excursions from the nur-

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sery, and extend our acquaintance with the world around us; as the sphere of our intercourse becomes extended, the objects greatly multiply, whose qualities and modes of affecting us it becomes our paramount interest to observe and record. It is thus the every-day duty of life to distinguish the useful from the pernicious; and there are few moments of our lives that are not employed in pointing out distinctions founded upon the different degrees of utility which exist amongst the various physical objects and moral actions with which we are hourly conversant. "It seems so natural," as Mr. Hume observes, "a thought to ascribe to their utility the praise which we bestow on the social virtues, that one would expect to meet with this principle everywhere in moral writers, as the chief foundation of their reasoning and inquiry. In common life, we may observe, that the circumstance of utility is always appealed to; nor is it supposed, that a greater eulogy can be given to any man, than to display his usefulness to the public, and enumerate the services he has performed to mankind and society. What praise, even of an inanimate form, if the regularity and elegance of its parts destroy not its fitness for any useful purpose? And how satisfactory an apology for any disproportion or seeming deformity, if

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we can show the necessity of that particular construction for the use intended? A ship appears more beautiful to an artist, or one moderately skilled in navigation, where its prow is wide and swelling beyond its poop, than if it were framed with a precise geometrical regularity, in contradiction to all the laws of mechanics. A building, whose doors and windows were exact squares, would hurt the eye by that very proportion, as ill suited to the figure of a human creature, for whose service the fabric was intended. What wonder, then, that a man, whose habits and conduct are hurtful to society, and dangerous or pernicious to every one who has intercourse with him, should, on that account, be an object of disapprobation, and communicate to every spectator the strongest sentiment of disgust and hatred."*

When we view the nature of man, apart from the objects which surround him, we find him with a strong bias towards sin; and the passions which are implanted in his nature carry excess with them in their very essence or constitution. We may direct our attention to the rule of moral duty, which is contained in the light of nature, or in the express commands of scripture; and if we find we are run-

* Essays, p. 245.

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ning counter to either the one or the other, or both, we must come to the conclusion, that we are violating the precepts of the moral law, and doing those things which we ought not to perform. But it is equally clear, that the law of nature and the word of God are appeals to our reason, and they must be interpreted in strict conformity with its principles, and the circumstances of their physical and moral condition. We are told, for example, both by the law of nature and the express declarations of the divine record, that we ought to be temperate in eating and drinking; but the exact portion of liquid or solid sustenance we are to take, the nature or kind of either, or the stated times of refreshment, are not specially pointed out to us. These are to be left to our own judgment. And, in like manner, we are told to be charitable, and to be angry and sin not; but the exact portion of our goods which we are to give to others, or the way in which, and the time when, such disposal is to be made; or to what extent we are to indulge the passion of anger, must depend entirely upon the circumstances of our state, and upon many considerations which must form the source of nice and refined calculations. Now, here we are in want of another rule of moral duty besides the suggestions of nature, and the express word of

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God, to determine the moral worth or turpitude of our actions. This rule must be sought for in the consequences or results of the indulgence of our passions. If our passions or appetites have not been indulged beyond their legitimate boundaries, they have accordingly been directed to proper ends, and they will prove productive of good to ourselves and to others; but if, on the contrary, they have been indulged to an improper or criminal extent, this excessive indulgence is productive of inconvenience, discomfort, and misery, both to ourselves and others; and we are thus taught to consider, that we have transgressed the rules of moral propriety and decorum. In many cases it is only from experience, and extensive knowledge and observation, that we are able to detect the rule of moral rectitude founded upon the results or consequences of an indulgence of our passions and appetites; but when this rule is formed, and kept steadily in our eye, it is productive of the happiest effects on our prospects and happiness.

There has commonly prevailed, I think, amongst moral writers of late date, some degree of misapprehension as to the exact opinions which Mr. Hume held on the nature of moral obligation. He has uniformly been represented as an advocate of the pure and exclusively selfish theory; but this opinion is

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founded on a mistake. He was a strenuous advocate for the existence of a benevolent principle in human nature; and always seemed much averse to any system which might seem to have only a remote tendency to throw doubt or uncertainty on the nature of our moral feelings and opinions. He says, on this head, "These arguments on each side (meaning the two systems of selfishness, and pure benevolence) are so plausible, that I am apt to suspect they may, the one as well as the other, be solid and satisfactory; and that reason and sentiment concur in almost all moral determinations and conclusions. The final sentence, it is probable, which pronounces characters and actions amiable or odious, praiseworthy or blamable; that which stamps on them the mark of honour or infamy, approbation or censure; that which renders morality an active principle, and constitutes virtue our happiness, and vice our misery; it is probable, I say, that this final sentence *depends on some internal sense or feeling, which nature has made universal in the whole species.* For what else can have an influence of this nature? But, in order to pave the way for such a sentiment, and give a proper discernment to its object, it is often necessary, we find, that much reasoning should precede, that nice distinctions be made, just conclusions

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drawn, distant comparisons formed, complicated relations examined, and general facts fixed and ascertained. Some species of beauty, especially the natural kinds, on their first appearances, command an affection and approbation; and where they fail of this effect, it is impossible for any reasoning to redress their influence, or adapt them better to our taste and sentiment. But, in many orders of beauty, particularly those of the finer arts, it is requisite to employ much reasoning, in order to feel the proper sentiment; and a false relish may frequently be corrected by argument and reflection. There are just grounds to conclude, that moral beauty partakes much of this latter species, and demands the assistance of our intellectual faculties, in order to give it a suitable influence in the human mind."*

In the appendix prefixed to Mr. Hume's disquisitions on the nature of virtue, this subject is more fully discussed; and he maintains, with much spirit, acuteness, and elegance, the opinion, that all virtue is ultimately resolvable into reason and sentiment. I have always looked upon this appendix as containing a very fine specimen of writing, as well as of close and consecutive reasoning on moral subjects.

Mr. Hume's theory of utility is comprised under

* Essays, p. 209.

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the following heads, viz. 1st, Of the general principles of morals. 2d, Of benevolence. 3d, Of justice. 4th, Of political society. 5th, Why utility pleases. 6th, Of qualities useful to ourselves. 7th, Of qualities immediately agreeable to ourselves. 8th, Of qualities immediately agreeable to others. 9th, Conclusion. We will have to say a few words upon each of these heads, by way of assisting the reader in forming a general conception of the system under review.

1st, On the general principles of morals, Mr. Hume states the usual methods of reasoning followed by different writers on morals, and endeavours to lay down some useful rules, and to throw out some hints, which he conceives may be of particular advantage to all moral writers, who are actuated with a candid and ingenuous desire to prosecute their studies with fairness and impartiality.

2d, He endeavours to show, that benevolence is praised and esteemed amongst men, because of the utility or benefit which it produces. The epithets sociable, generous, beneficent, good-natured, humane, merciful, grateful, and their equivalents, are to be found in all languages; and are mainly descriptive of those qualities which produce happiness and comfort amongst our species. In the exercise of

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parental affection we seek what is for the permanent benefit of the child. The ties of friendship are only strong when connected with obliging offices, and beneficial and kind attention to our welfare. "His domestics and dependants have in him a sure resource; and no longer dread the power of fortune, but so far as she exercises it over him. From him the hungry receive food, the naked clothing, the ignorant and slothful skill and industry. Like the sun, an inferior minister of Providence, he cheers, invigorates, and sustains the world around him."

3d, Justice arises from its usefulness to individuals and to society; and the following passages contain the principles of all Mr. Hume's reasonings on this topic. "Let us suppose, that nature has bestowed on the human race such profuse abundance of all external conveniences, that, without any uncertainty in the event, without any care or industry on our part, every individual finds himself fully provided with whatever his voracious appetites can want, or luxurious imagination wish or desire. His natural beauty, we shall suppose, surpasses all acquired ornaments. The perpetual clemency of the seasons renders useless all clothes or covering; the raw herbage affords him the most delicious fare; the clear fountain the richest beverage. No labo-

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rious occupation required; no tillage; no navigation. Music, poetry, and contemplation, form his sole business; conversation, mirth, and friendship, his sole business.

"It seems evident, that, in such a happy state, every other social virtue would flourish, and receive tenfold increase; but the cautious jealous virtue of justice would never once have been dreamed of. For what purpose make a partition of goods, where every one has already more than enough? Why give rise to property, where there cannot possibly be any injury? Why call this object mine, when, upon the seizing it by another, I need but stretch out my hand to possess myself of what is equally valuable? Justice, in that case, being totally USELESS, would be an idle ceremony, and could never possibly have place in the catalogue of virtues."

4th, The origin of society, and the rules and laws which arise out of a political confederacy, whether these relate to the internal government of the state, or to its intercourse with other social communities, are all founded upon utility. Human nature requires the guiding and controlling power of civil authority; for no association of individuals, however limited, can subsist, without a proper respect were shewn to the rules and principles of equity and jus-

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tice. War, confusion, civil strife, and every man's hand turned against every man's, are the natural effects of want of laws, and a disregard of the principles of political society; and, therefore, it is that we so highly extol whatever has a tendency to uphold the fabric of the social contract, and to keep unimpaired the unity of will and action of the community of which we are members.

5th, "*Why utility pleases?*" is a question which is resolved with less clearness by Mr. Hume than any other he has stated in his theory. He seems to think, that the reason why we bestow praise or blame upon actions performed in distant times and places, which cannot, in their consequence, be supposed to effect, either directly or indirectly, our own comforts or prosperity, arises from a benevolent concern we are always, in a lesser or greater degree, inclined to feel for the happiness and misery of our fellow-men, in whatever situation we or they may be placed.

6th, *The qualities useful to ourselves*, such as discretion, caution, enterprise, industry, assiduity, frugality, economy, good sense, prudence, discernment, temperance, sobriety, patience, constancy, perseverance, fore thought, considerateness, secrecy, order, insinuation, address, presence of mind, quick-

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ness of perception, facility of expression, and several more besides, are qualities whose sole merit depends upon their tendency to advance the happiness and respectability of the person who possesses them. It seems evident, that, where a quality or habit is subjected to our examination, if it appear in any respect prejudicial to the person possessed of it, or such as incapacitates for business or action, it is instantly blamed, and ranked amongst his faults and imperfections. Indolence, negligence, want of order and method, obstinacy, fickleness, rashness, credulity; these qualities were never esteemed by any one indifferent to a character, much less extolled as accomplishments or virtues. The prejudice resulting from them immediately strikes our eye, and gives us the sentiment of pain and disapprobation.

"No quality, it is allowed, is absolutely either blamable or praiseworthy. It is all according to its degree. A due medium, say the Peripatetics, is the characteristic of virtue. But this medium is chiefly determined by utility. A proper celerity, for instance, and despatch in business, is commendable. When defective, no progress is ever made in the execution of any purpose; when excessive, it engages us in precipitate and ill-concerted measures and enterprises. By such reasonings we fix the

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proper and commendable mediocrity in all moral and prudential disquisition, and never lose sight of the advantages which result by any character or habit."*

7th, *The qualities immediately agreeable to ourselves* are, cheerfulness of disposition, greatness of mind, courage, tranquillity, benevolence. These become agreeable to ourselves, because they tend to promote our own comfort in life, and also the good of mankind in general.

8th, *Qualities immediately agreeable to others* are, politeness, wit, a well cultivated mind, modesty, decency, or a proper regard to age, sex, character, and station in society; to which may be added, neatness, and cleanliness of person. "But, besides all the agreeable qualities, the origin of whose beauty we can, in some degree, explain and account for, there still remains something mysterious and inexplicable, which conveys an immediate satisfaction to the spectator; but how, or why, or for what reason, he cannot pretend to determine. There is a manner, a grace, an ease, a gentleness, and I know not what, which some men possess above others, which is very different from external beauty and comeliness, and which, however, catches our affection al-

* Essays, p. 266.

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most as suddenly and powerfully. And though this manner be chiefly talked of in the passion between the sexes, where the concealed magic is easily explained, yet surely much of it prevails in all our estimation of characters, and forms no inconsiderable part of personal merit. This class of accomplishments, therefore, must be trusted entirely to the blind but sure testimony of taste and sentiment, and must be considered as a part of ethics, left by nature to baffle all the pride of philosophy, and make her sensible of her narrow boundaries and slender acquisition.

"We approve of another, because of his wit, politeness, modesty, decency, or any agreeable quality which he possesses; although he be not of our acquaintance, nor has ever given us any entertainment by means of these accomplishments. The idea we form of their effect on his acquaintance has an agreeable influence on our imagination, and gives us the sentiment of approbation. This principle enters into all the judgments which we form concerning manners and character."

9th, In conclusion, it must appear obvious, that what is termed *personal merit* must consist entirely of qualities useful or agreeable to ourselves, or to others. Whatever is considered valuable or desir-

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able by mankind is naturally classed under the division of the useful and the agreeable; and so generally is this the case, that, upon a dispassionate view of the matter, one is inclined to wonder how so obvious a principle should have so long escaped the searching eye of philosophy. "The complete delineation or description of merit seems to be performed as naturally as the shadow is cast by the sun, or an image is reflected upon water. If the ground on which the shadow is cast be not broken or uneven, nor the surface from which the image is reflected disturbed and confused, a just figure is immediately presented, without any art or intention. And it seems a reasonable presumption, that systems and hypotheses have perverted our natural understanding, when a theory so simple and obvious could so long have escaped the most elaborate examination.

"But however the case may have fared with philosophy, in common life these principles are still implicitly maintained; nor is any other topic of praise or blame ever recurred to when we employ any panegyric or satire, any applause or censure, of human action and behaviour. If we observe men, in every intercourse of business or pleasure, in every discourse or conversation, we shall find

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them nowhere, except in the schools, at any loss on this subject. What so natural, for instance, as the following dialogue? You are very happy, we shall suppose one to say, addressing himself to another, that you have given your daughter to Cleanthes. He is a man of honour and humanity. Every one who has any intercourse with him is sure of fair and kind treatment, (qualities useful to others). I congratulate you, too, says another, on the promising expectations of this son-in-law, whose assiduous application to the study of the laws, whose quick penetration and early knowledge, both of men and business, prognosticate the greatest honours and advancement, (qualities useful to the person himself). You surprise me, replies a third, when you talk of Cleanthes as a man of business and application. I met him lately in a circle of the gayest company, and he seemed to be the very life and soul of our conversation. So much wit with good manners; so much gallantry without affectation; much ingenious knowledge so genteelly delivered, I have never before observed in any one, (qualities immediately agreeable to others). You would admire him still more, says a fourth, if you knew him more familiarly. That cheerfulness, which you might remark in him, is not a sudden flash struck out by company;

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it runs through the whole tenor of his life, and preserves a perpetual serenity on his countenance, and tranquillity in his soul. He has met with severe trials, misfortunes as well as dangers; and, by his greatness of mind, was still superior to all of them, (qualities immediately agreeable to the person himself). The image, gentlemen, cried I, which you have delineated of Cleanthes is that of accomplished merit. A philosopher might select this character as a model of perfect virtue."*

The ambiguities of language have proved a fruitful source of disputation in moral science, but in no particular department of that science more than in the theory now under consideration. For by the meaning which is attached to the words *what is useful?* or *what is expedient?* the whole controversy turns. If by *what is useful or expedient*, be meant that which is conducive to the permanent happiness or comfort of ourselves, as well as the community of which we are members, then I think we would be fully warranted in saying, that those human actions which promote such ends, must be considered virtues on account of their beneficial tendency. When doubts are raised against any particular set of actions, whether of a private or public

* Essays, p. 302.

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nature, if it be shown that the *result* of them is good and useful to the public, and not seriously detrimental to individual happiness, then all objections become immediately silenced, and we readily acquiesce in the propriety of designating those actions as fit and proper to be done. In this light the doctrine of utility cannot be said to be opposed to sound notions of the government of God, as that government is made known to us by the course of nature, or the express declarations of Scripture. To suppose that what is considered useful or expedient, according to the comprehensive signification here meant to be given to these terms, could be wrong or improper, would be at once to call in question the goodness of the Deity; for we invariably represent His government as calculated to promote, in an eminent degree, every good and beneficent purpose; besides, there would be a great and manifest contradiction in our reasoning, were we to make utility or expediency the standard of the goodness and wisdom of God, and yet at the same time maintain, that this very same standard was decidedly erroneous and mischievous, when applied to the actions of men.

But if, on the other hand, the words *utility or expediency* be interpreted to mean whatever pro-

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motes our present happiness, comfort, or welfare, without any direct reference to the good of others, or even our own permanent or lasting well-being; then the theory of usefulness is decidedly erroneous and dangerous. If we be guided by a system of this kind, we will exhibit in our conduct that we prefer present comfort to lasting happiness, and that low and selfish gratifications can be freely bartered for more exalted and permanent enjoyments.

It may therefore be affirmed, that what is in the long run right, just, and good, must in all cases be useful and expedient to be performed; and *vice versa*. The plans of providence, as well as the word of God, only sanction those principles which are calculated to promote the lasting and true happiness of individuals, as well as of whole nations; and nothing can appear to our better judgment more preposterous, than to suppose that man was made to follow a course of conduct productive of nothing but useless or unprofitable results. We should justly be chargeable with a love of paradox, or rather of folly, were we to maintain that a certain thing is useful or expedient to be done, but that it is not right to be done, because it is useful and expedient. And yet this is precisely what some writers have done, who have written against the

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theory in question. They have taken a narrow and erroneous view of the subject. It may readily enough be conceded, that some things may be useful and expedient, and yet the doing of them may be criminal; but this arises from these things not being for the general or permanent interest of man. The laws of nations, and the civil regulations of every people, furnish many examples which might amply and pointedly illustrate this position. But it must be self-evident to every dispassionate mind, that where our moral duty perfectly coincides with our general interests, we must be fully warranted in maintaining that utility, using that word in its extended signification, must be the standard of moral obligation; for the plainest and simplest deductions of reason must impress us with a conviction, that what is conducive to our temporal and eternal interests, must be in perfect harmony with the constitution of nature, and the revealed will of God.

When we take a comprehensive survey of the works of creation and providence, with a view of proving the existence of a divine ruler, and of demonstrating His various attributes, we proceed upon the principle of showing that such and such arrangements are salutary and beneficial, either immediately or remotely; and that, though some

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things appear puzzling and unaccountable, we are induced, the farther we prosecute our inquiries into the secrets of nature and the ways of providence, to come to the conclusion, that if we possessed more discriminating powers of comprehension, and a more correct and intimate acquaintance with the ultimate effects of such operations as we behold, we should readily conclude that every thing worked together to produce the greatest portion of order and happiness. It is upon this kind of reasoning that we ground the position, that benevolence and goodness form conspicuous attributes of the Divine mind. Utility becomes here the standard, so to speak, of the goodness and wisdom of the Almighty. And could any thing be detected in the constitution of the universe, of a decidedly evil or injurious nature, we would be bound by the fairest rules of reasoning, to call in question the attributes of goodness and benevolence of the Deity. This clearly points out to us, that we estimate the goodness of God by the sum of individual and general happiness which results from His mode of government; and when we consider the conduct of men, and those consequences which invariably follow from that conduct, as far as they are per-

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ceived by us, we are led to establish the same rule or mode of judgment.

It must be owned that the system of utility has been often greatly and shamefully perverted. The benevolent feelings of our nature have been ascribed to habit or to the early prejudices of education, and no part left to nature. Some have affirmed, that benevolence is nothing but hypocrisy, friendship a cheat, public spirit a farce, and honesty a snare to entrap the innocent and unsuspecting into an ill-timed confidence. Others, endeavouring to soften the glaring selfishness of this doctrine, have attempted to steer a middle path, by maintaining that whatever affections or emotions we may seem to feel for others, no passion can, in its nature, be really and purely benevolent or disinterested; for the most generous devotion to the welfare of others, is at bottom nothing but a refined species of selfishness, or a modification of self-love. We are liable to a species of deception; for while we affect to feel deeply and really for the misfortunes and troubles of others, and enter zealously into every scheme for promoting their comfort and happiness, we only seek all the while our own gratification in some shape or another. And experience teaches

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us that a conscience guided by the common and loose principles of expediency, is of all others the most accommodating, and the most easily satisfied. There is nothing low, nothing unreasonable, nothing squeamish, pressing, or astringent about a man's conduct who grounds his moral principles upon the slender basis of partial utility; his conscience is full of pliability, like a well-made dress, neither cripples his movements, nor disturbs his digestion.

It cannot be denied but that many appearances of human nature give great countenance to these opinions, and that it is the abuse of the doctrine of utility or expediency which gives rise to by far the greater proportion of immorality and crime which we every day behold around us. It is generally under the plea of some partial or general good, that men are enticed to depart from the path of rectitude; and it seldom happens that we can trace moral delinquency to any thing like a pure love of evil itself. We are all very prone to take limited and short-sighted views of what is for our interest and welfare, and to indulge in some trifling gratification, at the expense of our own permanent as well as the public good. This is the great besetting sin of mankind. It is a difficult task to per-

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suade us of the utility or expediency of a thing, if it has even an apparent tendency to oppose our present advantage, or to run counter to our present gratifications or wishes. This ever has been, and it may justly be feared ever will be, the condition of man even in a state of civil communion. In a complicated state of society, one man's interest appears frequently to be decidedly opposed to another's, and where there is such a general eagerness and excitement either for the possession of real or supposed advantages, the spirit of contention must necessarily rise to a considerable height, and this will give birth to many unpleasant feelings, as well as distorted and limited views of general utility and happiness. It is true that reason may frequently interpose her authority, and point out to us the evil of our ways; yet when we are vehemently engaged in the pursuit of any object which has engrossed our attention, the cool dictates of the understanding present but a feeble barrier against the violence of our inclinations. It is, however, always considered the perfection of human virtue, to look beyond these temporary and transient views of private and public utility; to take an extended survey of our duty and lasting interests, and to nourish the principle of general philanthropy,

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which, in proportion to strength and vigour, diffuses its cheering, beneficent, and healing influence through the whole family of mankind.

> "Friend, parent, neighbour, first it will embrace,
> His country next, and next all human race."

We will now notice two or three principal objections which have been frequently urged against the doctrine of utility.

1st, It has been said that utility is untenable from the consideration that we are not able, from our very limited faculties, to perceive the ultimate consequences of our actions. The effects of a good or an evil action may extend to eternity; and none but an infinite mind can possibly be conceived to know the final end of it. And even actions which may be considered by the world as of a trivial kind, may nevertheless be productive of very extensive and endless consequences. The truth of this has so frequently forced itself upon the notice of the observers of mankind, that it has given rise to a common proverb upon the subject—that the greatest and most momentous things frequently owe their origin to very trifling, and apparently very inadequate causes. Every person's experience and reflection will furnish him with many instances of

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this. Can, therefore, a man pronounce upon the merits of an action, as being generally and finally expedient, by reason of that portion of usefulness which he may, by his limited powers, perceive to follow from it? "Is the degree of expediency which we can discern, in any case, such as to justify us in inferring we have a tolerable insight into general expediency? Surely no one will answer in the affirmative. As well might an Abyssinian pretend to delineate the whole course of the Nile, in consequence of having traced the windings of the infant river for a few miles contiguous to his hut. As well might a fisherman infer, that his line, which has reached the bottom of the creek in which he exercises his trade, is capable of fathoming the depth of the Atlantic."*

2d, The principle of utility has been considered by some writers as false, from its opposition to divine revelation. The scriptures pre-suppose that they alone are to furnish mankind with a sufficient rule for their conduct, as well as objects of their faith and hope. The very fact of God giving a law to his creatures, by which they were to regulate their feelings and actions, is tantamount to a declaration that this law must be the sole test or

* Gisborne's Principles of Moral Philosophy.

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criterion of duty or moral obligation; and that no principle which mere human reason may establish can be a safe foundation for a standard of morals.

There is nothing contained in the scriptures which can warrant us in supposing that any of the duties or commands found therein can be dispensed with, upon the condition of anticipated benefit or utility. They are of the most authoritative nature, and require the most implicit obedience. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might: And these words which I command thee this day shall be in thy heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in the house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou riseth up: And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes; and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and upon thy gates."*

The principle of utility or expediency is considered contrary to the benevolence which the divine record so earnestly inculcates. Our Saviour commands us to do good, without making any self-

* Deut. vi. 5—9.

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ish calculations as to the benefits to be derived from our actions:—"If ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans do so?"

3d, It is maintained that utility is opposed to some of the most common and well established principles of our constitution. We approve of actions before we can see their advantages; and a great deal of what is termed virtue, seems to be performed without any immediate reference to the end produced. The hero who dies for his country receives the warmest homage of our praise, before we have time to take into our consideration the extent of the benefits which will result from his devotedness; and the martyr who gives his life for the testimony to the truth of his religion, receives our praise, though we know not the extent of the good obtained.

There are a few more objections commonly urged against the doctrine of Mr. Hume's; but as the substance of them will have to be given when we come to review another popular system of morals, which differs from his in little more than in name, we will leave them for the present. In con-

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clusion, it may be observed that "*The Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*" ought to stand very high as a pleasant and instructive performance; and we are told in the biographical notices of its author, that he considered it the best of all his writings. It contains no principles that are directly or pointedly in hostility to the general doctrines of natural or revealed religion; nor any of those flippant remarks, or coarse sneers, against these important subjects, which are to be found in many other parts of his works. Had Mr. Hume never written any thing more unphilosophical in its tenets, and mischievous in its influence, than the treatise in question, it would have been better for his lasting fame, and for the permanent interests of mankind. His peculiar style and manner are admirably set off in this part of his works; there is an ease and gracefulness in almost every sentence, which many subsequent writers have tried to imitate, but which few have been fortunate enough to rival.

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CHAPTER XIX.

DRS. HARTLEY AND PRIESTLEY.

VIBRATIONS AND ASSOCIATION OF IDEAS.

Doctor David Hartley was born on the 26th August 1705. He was the son of a very worthy and respectable clergyman, at Armsley, in the county of York. He received the first rudiments of his education at a private school, and his academical instruction at Cambridge. He was admitted to Jesus' College at the age of fifteen years, and was afterwards elected a fellow of that Society. He was originally intended for the church, and proceeded for some time in his thoughts and studies towards that object; but upon a closer consideration of the conditions attached to the clerical pro-

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fession, he was restrained by some scruples which made him reluctant to subscribe the thirty-nine articles. In consequence of these scruples he became disqualified for the pursuit of his first plan of devoting himself to the personal functions and service of the church. However, he still continued to the end of his life a well-affected member of the Church of England, approving of its practical doctrines, and conforming to its public worship.

He went through a regular course of instruction for the purpose of qualifying himself for a medical profession, and he afterwards practised with considerable success in Northamptonshire, London, and Bath, at which latter place he continued to the day of his death, which took place in the year 1757.

Dr. Hartley's first publication was in 1737, and entitled "A View of the Present Evidence for and against Mrs. Stephen's Medicines as a Solvent for the Stone;" and it is said, that not long after, he wrote a treatise in defence of inoculation for the small-pox. But his greatest work, "Observations on Man, his Frame, his Duty, and his Expectations," was not published until 1747, though it had been written for more than three years before.

Dr. Hartley is uniformly represented by his biographers as a person of great piety and personal

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worth. He lived upon the most intimate terms of friendship with Drs. Low, Butler, Warburton, and Jortin, and many other eminent authors of his day.

Dr. Joseph Priestley, a celebrated philosopher and divine, was born on the 24th March 1733, of parents who belonged to a body of dissenters of the Calvinistic persuasion, at Field-head, near Leeds. He early adopted the Unitarian principles, of which he became an eminent and zealous supporter. He has distinguished himself principally by his philosophical labours. In 1767, he published his history of electricity, and dedicated it to the Earl of Morton, President of the Royal Society; and this publication, with some other chemical tracts, gained him so much reputation, that proposals were made to him by the Earl of Shelburne, to go and reside in his family, which were too advantageous to be refused. During his residence with the noble earl, he published his examination of the Doctrine of Common Sense, as held by Drs. Beattie, Reid, and Oswald; and, in 1777, his Disquisitions on Matter and Spirit made their appearance, in which he openly supported the material system, which subjected him to a greater degree of odium than any

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of his other opinions. This publication was afterwards followed by a defence of Unitarianism, or the simple humanity of Christ, and of the doctrine of philosophical necessity. After continuing in this family for several years, he displeased his Lordship by some of his theological opinions, and he retired on a pension of L.150 per annum.

It cannot be expected, in a short essay like the present, that a complete analysis can be given of all the works of the above-named authors, or of several other writers, who have distinguished themselves by advocating the doctrines of vibrations, and the association of ideas. The only practicable plan, without spinning our observations to too great a length, and thereby exhausting the attention of the reader, is to treat the subjects, mentioned at the head of this chapter, generally, to look at the most prominent features of the entire system, and to examine its leading principles.

The doctrines in question, those of vibrations, and the association of ideas, though noticed before Dr. Hartley's time, were not embodied into any regular system, but consisted in loose hints and casual observations. But, after the publication of that phi-

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losopher's treatise "*On Man*," these questions assumed a more imposing attitude; they formed one of the public theories of the day; philosophical curiosity was roused; and every one appeared desirous of seeing how beautifully the Doctor, "by an admirable example of synthetic reasoning," would show to the world that man was only a species of living harpsichord; and that all the faculties of his body and soul might be traced to a single principle or two—the doctrine of vibrations, and the association of ideas. Some hailed the doctrine with a becoming degree of rapture and admiration, and solemnly vowed, that every thing of an intellectual and moral nature, which had puzzled them before, was now clearly and satisfactorily explained. On the other hand, many considered the new doctrine as ominous of a relapse into scholastic barbarism and ignorance; besides taking into account the very suspicious operation it might have on morals and religion. But, after many years have elapsed, and many keen and bitter controversies have passed away, leaving but very faint traces of their existence, we still find the doctrine of the association of ideas taught, either generally or partially, in the schools of moral and metaphysical philosophy; still possessing, in the eyes of many persons of learning

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and distinction, all those synthetic charms, and that logical beauty of form, which captivated so many heads and hearts, when this doctrine first made its appearance on the stage of science under the patronage and auspices of Dr. Hartley.

The Hartleian system may be considered principally as a mental system, at least that part of it which consists of the doctrine of vibrations; and ought, therefore, to be more properly referred to metaphysics than to morals. His theory of vibrations is, however, so connected and mixed up with his moral speculations and principles, that it becomes absolutely necessary, for the right understanding of them, that the reader should have some general conception or idea of the nature of his mental philosophy. In giving an outline of this part of the Doctor's work, we will endeavour to be as brief as perspicuity and the abstract and recondite nature of the doctrine will admit.

By Dr. Hartley's own account, as well as from that of his zealous and respectable followers, Drs. Priestley and Belsham, it would appear, that the first suggestions which he received of the doctrine of vibrations were from some casual hints contained in the works of Sir Isaac Newton. In that philosopher's "*Principia*," and in the "Queries" at the

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end of his Optics, we find the remarks alluded to. Sir Isaac Newton supposes, that a very subtile and elastic fluid, which he calls *Æther*, for the sake merely of giving it a name, is diffused through the pores of all gross bodies, as well as through the open spaces that are void of gross matter. He supposes, likewise, that it is rarer in the pores of bodies than in open spaces, and even rarer in small pores and dense bodies than in large pores and rare bodies; and also that its density increases in receding from gross matter; so, for instance, as to be greater at the one-hundredth of an inch from the surface of any body than at its surface; and so on in a corresponding proportion. To the action of this *æther* he ascribes the attractions of gravitation and cohesion, the attractions and repulsions of electrical bodies, the mutual influences of bodies and light upon each other, the effects and communications of heat, and the performance of *animal sensation and motion*. In the "Queries" attached to Sir Isaac's Optics we find the following:—"Do not the rays of light, in falling upon the bottom of the eye, excite vibrations in the *tunica retina*? Which vibrations being propagated along the solid fibres of the optic nerves into the brain, cause the sense of seeing. For, because dense bodies conserve

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their heat a long time, and the densest bodies conserve their heat the longest, the vibrations of their parts are of a lasting nature; and, therefore, may be propagated along solid fibres of uniform dense matter, to a great distance, for conveying into the brain the impressions made upon all the organs of sense. For that motion which can continue long in one and the same part of a body can be propagated a long way from one part to another, supposing the body homogeneal; so that the motion may not be reflected, refracted, interrupted, or disordered, by any unevenness of the body."

"Quest. 13.—Do not several sorts of rays make vibrations of several bignesses, which, according to their bignesses, excite sensations of several colours, much after the manner that the vibrations of the air, according to their several bignesses, excite sensations of several sounds? And, particularly, do not the most refrangible rays excite the shortest vibrations for making a sensation of deep violet, the least refrangible the largest for making a sensation of deep red, and the several intermediate sorts of rays, vibrations of several intermediate bignesses, to make sensations of the several intermediate colours?"

From the suggestions contained in these quota-

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tions, the Doctor founded his whole system of vibrations. His doctrine may be briefly comprehended in the following summary:—All our ideas and sensations are derived from external objects acting through the medium of our organs of sense or perception; namely, sight, taste, hearing, feeling, and smelling. These different organs consist of nerves suited to their nature; and by these nerves being affected by the external impulse of various bodies, they convey these outward impressions to the brain, which is the great reservoir or common centre of the nervous influence. The nerves and the brain are considered to be the same in their natures and properties. Whether these nerves resemble *tubes*, for the purpose of conveying a fluid, or they partake of the nature of cords or strings, is not fully decided; but Drs. Hartley and Priestley are inclined to the latter supposition, that the nerves vibrate someway analogous to a stringed instrument of music.

That sensations are conveyed to the brain in the form of vibration, is rendered highly probable from the manner in which the senses of seeing and hearing are affected. It is maintained that the retina is affected by the rays of light falling upon it with a tremulous motion, and that this impression or motion continues for some time, and gradually seems

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to die away, when the object which produced it is removed. If a person keep his eye fixed for any length of time upon a luminous object, and afterwards shut it, he will observe that the impression he feels seems to partake of the nature of a tremulous or vibratory motion. If the nerves employed in vision are affected at their extremity in this tremulous manner, does it not become exceedingly probable, that the impression is conveyed to the brain by a continuation of this same motion, seeing that the brain is precisely of the same nature as the nerves, and consequently that an idea is nothing more than a vibratory motion of the parts of the brain?

As the texture of the nerves, as far as observations can be made, appears to be the same in all the senses or organs of perception, it is but reasonable to infer from the analogy of structure, that if impressions on one sense be conveyed to the brain by vibrations, that the impressions upon the other senses will be conveyed in the same manner. In the organ of hearing this is very probable. The professors in the science of "*Acoustics*" tell us, that sound is produced by the agitation or vibratory motion of the air; and since this vibratory action must consist of successive pulses, it will communi-

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cate a tremulous motion to the auditory nerve, and this motion will be communicated to the brain, and produce in us the idea or sensation of sound.

It is maintained by Hartley and his followers, that the immense number and variety of vibrations which must take place in the brain at one and the same time, when our various senses are affected, can create no difficulty in this hypothesis, particularly if we consider that there seems to be no limit to the number and variety of the vibrations with which the air itself is capable of being impressed. In a concert, where a great number of instruments are employed, a person skilled in the art of music can attend to any one of these instruments which he pleases, to the almost total exclusion of the rest. When we attend crowded assemblies, where many voices are to be heard at one and the same time, we learn the art of attending to any one or two of them; but there can be no doubt but that the sound of the other voices makes an impression on our ear, but, from the absence of that principle which makes us pay attention to our ideas, we do not receive any sensible impression from them.

The various kinds of simple as well as complex ideas may be accounted for from the great difference in the nature of the vibrations occasioned in the

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brain; by various *degrees* of force in the vibrations, by a difference in their *kinds*, by the situation of the brain where they take place, *by the line of direction* in entering the brain, and by *the original differences in the constitution of the nerves themselves.*

The phenomena of vibrations are supposed to correspond happily enough in accounting for our *pleasurable* and *painful* sensations, by differing in *degree* and not in *kind*, and by passing insensibly from the pleasurable to the painful state. Thus, warmth to a moderate degree is pleasant and agreeable, but when it is increased beyond a certain measure, it becomes positively painful. Dr. Hartley conjectures that the limit of pleasure and of pain is the *solution of continuity* in the particles of the nerves and brain, occasioned by the violent vibrations which accompany the sense of pain.

In a solid, though soft substance, like the brain, vibrations affecting any part of it, will leave that part more disposed to vibrate in future; so that when a second impression is made on it through the medium of any of the senses or organs of perception, this second impression will, from this predisposition in the brain to be more readily affected by repetition, be easily detected from a first impression; and it is further affirmed, that if two or

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more vibrations take place in the brain at the same time, they will modify and affect one another to a certain degree; and when any one of them affects the brain at a subsequent period, it will be more disposed to act upon the former vibration with which it had been previously, in point of time, connected. From this supposed love or sympathy, the phenomena of the association of ideas and of memory are attempted to be deduced.

From this brief outline of the system of vibrations, the reader will, I hope, be able to form to himself a pretty correct conception of its nature. To give a more detailed account would only be attended with additional irksomeness, as the whole doctrine is dry, abstruse, and very little calculated to engage the attention of the general reader. Besides, the system of Hartley is not very susceptible of condensation, or of correct abridgment, on account of the facts and circumstances being so numerous, and the speculations so subtile and refined.

We come now to make a few remarks upon the second part of Dr. Hartley's system—that of the association of ideas. This doctrine was first formally broached by Mr. Locke, in his Essay on the Human Understanding, where he enters into some explanations respecting the nature of sympathies

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and antipathies, which he terms *non-natural*. He refers these sympathies and antipathies "to trains of motion in the animal spirits, which, once set a-going, continue in the same steps they have been used to, which, by often treading, are worn into a smooth path, and the motion in it becomes easy, and as it were natural. As far as we can comprehend thinking, thus ideas seem to be produced in our minds; or if they are not, this may serve to explain their following one another in an habitual train, when once they are put into that tract, as well as it does to explain such motions of the body."

Afterwards, Mr. Gay, a clergyman in the west of England, slightly treated this subject in a dissertation prefixed to Bishop Law's translation of Archbishop King's "*Origin of Evil*." Mr. Gay says, "Our approbation of morality, and all affections whatsover, are resolvable into reason, pointing out private happiness, and are conversant only about things apprehended to be means tending to this end; and whenever this end is not perceived, they are to be accounted for from the association of ideas, and may properly enough be called habits. If this be clearly made out, the necessity of supposing a moral sense or public affections to be implanted in us, (since it arises only from the insufficiency

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of all other schemes to account for human actions) will immediately vanish." It was from these hints that Dr. Hartley turned his attention to the doctrine now under consideration, on which it will now be our duty to make a few remarks.

The first thing we shall do is to endeavour to show, that the faculty or principle of what is called association, has nothing in it which is entitled to form the ground-work of any new moral or intellectual system; but all those mental and moral facts which are brought forward to illustrate it, may be referred to memory alone. To do this as effectually as we can, we will examine association in a mental as well as in an ethical point of view; because this system of the Doctor's attempts great things, that of not only explaining the principles of moral obligation, but also of tracing up all the phenomena of the mind to one single principle.

So close a connexion does there appear to subsist between memory and the associating principle, that I am totally at a loss to perceive in what respect the one differs from the other. One thought often suggests to the mind another thought, and one object of perception often recals former actions of our lives to our consideration; this is termed the association of ideas. But in what does this associa-

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tion differ from that of memory? I visit, by chance, after a lapse of years, a spot rendered sacred by the endearments of former friendships:—What a number of past events pass in rapid review before my understanding! Here I think I perceive my departed or long absent friend walking by my side; his features, gestures, and every little thing belonging to him, being fresh in my recollection; I fancy I hear him enlightening my mind with his wisdom, or assuaging the poignancy of my grief by his consolatory admonitions. But is there any thing, I would ask, in all this, which cannot be fully and adequately expressed by the word *memory*? By a certain object, or a number of objects of perception, a variety of former feelings are here revived in my mind, and a multitude of past perceptions, or ideas, brought to my recollection. By all writers on the mind, it appears to be the sole and only province of memory to bring these past perceptions or ideas to our remembrance; and it is impossible for us to conceive what could be meant by the word memory or remembrance, if our intellectual nature were stript of this comprehensive faculty, as defined by some late writers on the mind. Memory in the estimation of all mankind, in all ages of the world, has always been considered as doing this very thing

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which is ascribed to another faculty of the mind. Nor do any of the facts brought forward by Dr. Hartley in particular, tend to establish this distinction between association and memory. That connexion mentioned by him, which is formed in the mind between the words of a language and the ideas they denote, and the connexion between the different notes of a piece of music in the mind of a musician, do not appear to have the least influence in proving there is any difference between the two faculties of the mind now under consideration. The learning of languages, or in other words, the attaching certain ideas to certain words or signs, is solely an effort of memory; and the same may be said of our affixing certain sounds to certain musical characters. If a man had no power to recollect past events, no connexion between the words of a language and the ideas they stand for, nor any connexion between musical notes and certain sounds, could ever be formed in his mind. But a man who has the power of remembrance, has all that is necessary to enable him to learn languages and music; nor can I conceive, in a person so gifted, what there would be left to be accomplished in this department of his education by the faculty of association.

The principles which are said to regulate the as-

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sociation of ideas, are precisely those on which memory is founded. Resemblance and contrariety, continuity in time and place, cause and effect, premises and conclusion, have all an obvious and striking effect in bringing past ideas and events to our remembrance.

The language employed by writers on the association of ideas, clearly shows that, in almost all cases, they are only describing the operations of memory. This is particularly the case with a late distinguished writer. Mr. Stewart, in telling his readers what he means by the association of ideas, says, "In passing along a road which we have frequently travelled in the company of a friend, the particulars of the conversations in which we were then engaged are perpetually *suggested* to us by the objects we meet with. In such a scene we *recollect* that such a subject was started; and in passing the different houses and plantations, and rivers, the arguments we were discussing when we last saw them, *recur spontaneously to the memory*." Now if any person were called upon to tell us what he meant by the power of memory, could he give a more appropriate or clear definition of that faculty, than by employing the very words I have just now quoted? It may be urged against what I have

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here advanced respecting the identity of memory, and the association of ideas, that the latter power or principle is more comprehensive in its nature and application than the former; that memory is confined exclusively to denote those connexions formed between our present and past ideas and emotions; whereas association not only comprehends all these connexions between past and present perceptions, but also all those connexions which subsist between our ideas generally, without any relation to time whatever; or, in other words, that association is descriptive not only of a connexion between a present idea, and an idea which is past, but also of a connexion between a present idea and an idea or perception which has never before been present to the mind. But in this attempt to make association a more general intellectual law than that of memory, I would observe, that this general associating principle is founded entirely upon remembrance, and cannot, consistently with any definition which is given of it, stand for any connexion between our ideas, but that which subsists between ideas present and ideas past. Association is the tendency of one idea to introduce another into the mind. Very well, then; but how do we come to set it down as a general fact, that

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one set of ideas has an invariable tendency to introduce another set of ideas? By experience, it must be answered. But what is experience? Why, it is the *remembrance* of that which is past. But to put this matter in as clear a light as possible, let us suppose that A is a present idea in the mind, and that it has a tendency to introduce another idea, which has never been in the mind before, and which we will call B. To this tendency of A to introduce B into the mind is given the name of association. Now, how can we assent or deny any thing respecting the tendency of A to introduce B, till we have witnessed A's power over B, and have had B present to the understanding? The very proposition that A has an influence over B implies that we have seen this tendency, and that B must have previously been in the mind, and *consequently an object of memory.* Thus we see then, when we speak about connexions among our ideas, we must consider them as connexions which have been known before; and therefore we ought to infer, that the treating of them comes within the province of memory, and not within any other intellectual power whatever.

Dr. Hartley observes, that "the rudiments of memory are laid in the perpetual recurrency of the

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same impressions, and clusters of impressions. Here these leave traces, in which the order is preserved, may be understood from the eighth, ninth, tenth, and eleventh propositions.

"The traces which letters and words, *i. e.* clusters of letters, leave, afford an instance and example of this; and, as in languages, the letters are fewer than the syllables, and the syllables than the words, and the words than the sentences, so the single sensible impressions, and the small clusters of them, are comparatively few in respect of the larger clusters; and being so, they must recur more frequently, so as the sooner to beget those traces which I call the rudiments or elements of memory. When these traces or ideas begin to recur frequently, this also contributes to fix them and their order in the *memory*, in the same manner as the frequent impression of the objects themselves." The whole of these quotations contains nothing more nor less than an illustration of the faculty of simple memory.

Having said this much on the doctrine of association, considered in an intellectual point of view, let us apply the same reasoning a little further to the subjects of morals, and try if what is not in this science referred to association, may not be attributed

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to the common faculty of memory. Dr. Priestley, in one of his preliminary essays, prefixed to his abridgment of Hartley's book "On Man," has the following passage, which, he thinks, furnishes the most complete and distinct illustration of his favourite associating principle. He says, "The natural *progress* of a passion may be most distinctly seen in that of the *love of money*, which is acquired so late in life that every step in the progress may easily be traced. No person is born with the love of money, as such; a child is, indeed, pleased with a piece of coin, as he is with other things, the form or the splendour of which strikes his eye; but this is very different from that emotion which a man who has been accustomed to the use of money, and has known the want of it, feels upon being presented with a guinea or a shilling. This emotion is a very complex one, the component parts of which are indistinguishable, but which have been separately connected with the idea of money, and the uses of it. For, after a child has received the first species of pleasure from a piece of money as a mere *plaything*, he receives additional pleasure from the possession of it, by connecting with the idea of it the idea of the various pleasures and advantages which it is able to procure him—and, in time, that

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complex idea of pleasure, which was originally formed from the various pleasures which it was the means of procuring, is so intimately connected with the idea of money, that it becomes an object of a proper passion; so that men are capable of pursuing it without ever reflecting on the *use* that it may possibly be of to them."

Now, may we not ask, how is a child enabled to connect the various pleasures and advantages which it receives from time to time by the spending of money, but by the operation of his memory? You give him a piece of money; he goes and buys sweetmeats with it; he receives pleasure from the eating of them; and the next time he sees any money, he wishes to have it, because the pleasure he received from eating the last purchase comes fresh into his recollection. Why refer a case like this to a principle of association, when it as clearly and as plainly belongs to the province of memory, as words can be made to convey any thing moral or intellectual? The Doctor says, that various pleasures are somehow connected in the child's mind with the money. Certainly; no one doubts the fact. But this connexion is nothing but what mankind, in all ages, have attributed to memory. To refer a fact such as Dr. Priestley has stated above, to any other

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source, could arise only from whim or caprice, or the most determined and bigoted love of system.

The origin of an affection is accounted for in a similar manner by Mr. Belsham, a zealous advocate of Hartley's doctrine. He says, "I love my friend —this affection is compounded of complacency and good will. I think upon him with complacency, because he possesses many virtues, because he has been the immediate cause of many pleasing sensations and *recollections*, because his idea is associated with many other pleasures than those which he has directly produced. I desire his happiness from a sense of gratitude, from the delight I take in seeing him happy, and from the conviction that the greater his happiness is, the greater will be his capacity for communicating happiness to others, &c. These feelings coalesce into a complex and vivid affection; I call it friendship; it associates itself with the person of my friend, with his idea, with his name, and with many circumstances naturally or fortuitously connected with him."*

This is an illustration of the principle of association. We will pass over, without notice, two or three attempts in this quotation at something very like a begging of the question. The plain inter-

* Belsham's Elements of the Philosophy of the Mind, pp. 208-9.

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pretation of the passage is, that we feel an emotion after we follow a certain course, and this course is founded upon the principle of remembrance. We *recollect* that our friend has performed many virtuous and praise-worthy deeds; we *remember* that he has loaded us with benefits; we accordingly feel thankful for his kindness, and entertain a wish that his happiness may be as unbounded as his goodness. But what is there *new* in all this? What additional light is thrown upon the operation of our moral powers and affections by such a common-place statement as this? What *new* facts are here unfolded, or new logical arrangements exhibited, which can authorize the authors of such statements as the above quotations furnish to come forward to the world as the happy discoverers of a moral and metaphysical system, which ought, in their conception, to supersede all others, on account of its comprehensive nature and superlative excellence?

Let us quote a few more sentences from Dr. Hartley, shewing how men obtain notions of virtue and vice, and we will there find that he is only describing the faculty of memory. He says, "We come, in the last place, to consider moral accomplishments and defects, or virtue and vice. Now it is very evident, that the many advantages, public

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and private, which arise from the first, will engage the world to bestow upon it much honour and applause, in the same manner as the evil consequences of vice must make *it* the object of censure and reproach. Since therefore the child is affected with the words expressing honour and censure, both from the separate influences of these words, and from the application of the phrases of this kind to other subjects of praise and dispraise, he must be affected by the commendations bestowed upon him when he has done well, and by the censures past on him when he has done ill.

"These commendations and censures are also attended with great immediate rewards and punishments, likewise with the hopes and fears relating to another world; and when the moral sense is sufficiently generated, with great secret indeterminate pleasure and pain of this kind; and these associations add a particular force to the honour and shame belonging respectively to virtue and vice. At the same time it is easy to see, that some considerable progress in life is ordinarily required before men come to be deeply and lastingly affected by these things; also, that this kind of honour and shame may, at last, from the superior force of the associated pleasures and pains, absorb, as it were,

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all the other kinds. A religious man becomes at last insensible, in a great measure, to every encomium and reproach, excepting such as he apprehends will rest upon him at the last day, from Him whose judgment cannot err."

If a person will take the first volume of the treatise "On Man," and read it carefully over, and whenever he finds the words *association, associates, associating*, &c., let him replace them with the words *memory, remembered, remembrance, connected in his mind*, and he will find that the sense of the various passages in which the former class of words are used, will remain as completely the same, when words descriptive of memory are thus employed.

It may be considered as something curious, that Dr. Hartley, who may properly enough be looked upon as the author of this system of association,—a writer who gives such incontestible and signal evidence of his attachment to theory, and of his disposition to turn and twist every thing to square with his favourite doctrine; a man whose genius and acquirements were far above the common order, but who being led away by this *ignis fatuus* of association, only employed his talents to confound men's minds, and darken knowledge; I say

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it is something curious, that he should have been led into the same train of reasoning as is here adduced respecting the identity of association and memory. But this discovery of the tacit abandonment of his own system, slips out from his pen only as it were by accident; for he seems to have been much afraid to enlarge upon the topic. He says, "*For the same reason also, the whole powers of the soul may be referred to the memory, when taken in a large sense.*"* Now, will any of the disciples of the Doctor tell us, in what other *sense*, either large or circumscribed, the faculty of memory does *not* account for as much as association?

What must appear to every one as a great imperfection in this system, is its total want of some characteristic circumstance, some portion of individuality, by which it might be distinguished from other systems, and by which its truth or falsehood, its merits or demerits, might be tried. When you ask an advocate for the doctrine of utility or public expediency, what is the origin of morals? or what is the reason that men give the name of virtue to one set of actions, and that of vice to another? He will tell you, it is because man's nature is so

* Observations on Man, vol. i. p. 395.

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constituted, that he finds benefit or pleasure from some actions, and pain or evil from others. If you put the like question to a disciple of Dr. Smith's, he will tell you, that it is by a species of mental sympathy that we applaud virtue and denounce vice. But if you ask a philosopher of the association school, what is the reason that men feel a pleasure in practising virtue, and pain in following a contrary course? he will tell you, with a seriousness and gravity of one who conceives he has mighty things to communicate, that it is because there is some kind of connexion amongst our ideas, but of the real nature or modes of operation of which connexion he does not profess to know more than what is known by every body else. This is the true state of the case. The advocates of association state a simple fact, that there is a connexion amongst our ideas; but that fact appertains to, and forms the ground-work of every other moral system whatever. How association ever came to be considered as something anomalous, something to which its advocates possessed an exclusive right, and on which they could found a theory different from those of other writers, it is impossible to conceive. Association differs from other systems only in the change of a term. It is founded on the same principles, enforc-

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ed by the same arguments, illustrated by the same facts, and explained in the same language, which appertain to every philosophical view of human nature.

What a dull and paralyzing effect has the reading of a book, in which the principle of the association of ideas forms the philosophical *dramatis personæ* in the piece. It is hauled in to act all sorts of characters, from the distracted ravings of the most tragic feelings, down throughout all the intermediate stages of character, to the childish drolleries and whimsical fooleries of Punch. There is no way of getting through the book, without violating the rules of politeness, by enjoying a smile at the expense of the system. There is certainly uniformity in it, but it is the uniformity of the desert waste, where death-like monotony and sickening dulness take up their everlasting abode. Considered as a moral system, it is one of the most imperfect. No intellectual satisfaction arises from it. It discovers nothing which is new, and over the old portion of knowledge it throws no additional charms or embellishments. It is by some means considered as a part and parcel of a certain metaphysical and theological system; and by this its reputation is bolstered up, and it still

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finds some friends who take an interest in its welfare and diffusion. But for this cause, the system of association and vibrations would have fallen dead-born from the hands of Dr. Hartley, by the mere pressure of its own innate weakness and imperfection.

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CHAPTER XX.

LORD KAMES.

ESSAY ON THE PRINCIPLES OF MORALITY AND NATURAL RELIGION.

HENRY HOME, afterwards Lord Kames, was the son of Mr. George Home of Kames, in the county of Berwick, and was born in the year 1696. His early education was committed to a private tutor, till the time of his entering the college of Edinburgh.

He made choice of the law as a profession, and was called to the bar in 1724. The first thing which seems to have brought him into public notice, was the publication of "Remarkable Decisions of the Court of Session from 1716 to 1728." In February 1752, Mr. Home was appointed one of the Judges of the Court of Session, and took the title of Lord Kames. His first literary work, apart from his profession, was his "*Essays*

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on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion." In 1762, he published his "*Elements of Criticism,*" a standard work; and about ten years after, his "*Sketches of the History of Man,*" a work which added considerably to his literary reputation. After a laborious and useful life, he died in 1782, at the venerable age of 87.

Lord Kames prefaces his examination of the more abstract questions on Morals, by an essay on a subject which has long been considered by moral writers, as involving a view of human nature somewhat curious, if not paradoxical. The subject is the strong attachment all mankind have to objects of distress. This attachment is not limited to real objects, but is even felt towards fictitious ones. We feel great pleasure in poetry, painting, and dramatic representations, when they succeed in exciting in us a lively emotion of pain; and accordingly we find it is one of the great principles which runs through all works of fiction, that our passions must be roused to a degree bordering on pain, in order to raise our interest in them to a suitable pitch, and to throw over them the charms of a suitable embellishment.

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Some French philosophers have indulged in long and curious investigations on this principle of our nature. One of them thinks he has satisfactorily solved this moral problem, by maintaining that man being a creature made for exertion, wherever there is a want of something to excite his attention and move his passions, he falls into a state of langour and listlessness, which becomes in many cases tormenting, and altogether insupportable; and in order to remove himself from this state, he flies as it were, by instinct, to such things or objects as are calculated to exercise and rouse his passions; and it is in this way that men become fond of scenes which produce pain and apprehension. They suffer more uneasiness by languor and ennui, than by seeing objects of distress, either real or fictitious.

Lord Kames differs, however, from the author of this theory; and considers this desire and interest we feel to mingle our sorrows with others, as arising from a strong principle of sympathy implanted in our nature by our bountiful Creator; in order to render assistance to others, and to bind and cement society itself together. "When," says our author, "we examine those particular passions, which, though painful, not only in the first impression, but also in the gratification, if I may call it

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so, are yet accompanied with no aversion; we find they are all of the social kind, arising from that eminent principle of sympathy, which is the cement of society. The social passions are accompanied with appetite for indulgence, when they give us pain, not less than when they give us pleasure; we submit willingly to such painful passions, and reckon it no hardship to suffer under them. In this constitution, we have the consciousness of regularity and order, and that it is right and meet we should suffer after this manner. Thus, the moral affections, even such of them as produce pain, both in the first feeling, and in the indulgence of the passion, are none of them attended with any degree of aversion, not even in reflecting upon the distress they often bring us under. And this observation tends to set the moral affections in a more distinguished point of view, in opposition to those that are either malevolent, or merely selfish.

"Many and admirable are the springs of action in human nature, and not one more admirable than what is now unfolded. Compassion is a most valuable principle, which connects people in society by ties stronger than those of blood. Yet compassion is a painful emotion, and is often accompanied with pain in the indulgence. Were it accompanied with any

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degree of aversion, even in reflecting upon the distress it occasions, after the distress is over, that aversion would, by degrees, blunt the passion, and at length cure us of what we would be apt to reckon a weakness or disease. But the Author of our nature has not left his work imperfect. He has given us this noble principle entire, without a counterbalance, so as to have a vigorous and universal operation. Far from having any aversion to pain occasioned by the social principles, we reflect upon such pain with satisfaction, and are willing to submit to it upon all occasions with cheerfulness and heartliking, just as much as if it were a real pleasure."*

Lord Kames is an advocate for a *moral sense*, by which what we call moral beauty and deformity are perceived. But he looks upon this faculty in a somewhat different light from several other writers, namely, as having all our other moral principles, desires, and affections, under its immediate and complete control. "We may observe," says he, "in the next place, what will afterwards be explained, that *conscience* or the *moral sense* is none of our principles of action, but their guide and director. It is still of great importance to observe, that the authority of conscience does not merely consist in an act

* Principles of Morals, pp. 25, 26.

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of reflection. It proceeds from a direct feeling, which we have upon presenting the object, without the intervention of any sort of reflection, and the authority lies in this circumstance, that we feel and perceive the action to be our duty, and what we are indispensably bound to perform. It is in this manner that the *moral sense*, with regard to some actions, plainly bears upon it the marks of authority over all our appetites and affections. It is the voice of God within us which commands our strictest obedience; just as much as when his will is declared to us by express revelation."*

Lord Kames is an advocate for the doctrine of philosophical necessity; for though he maintains that there can be no morality without freedom of the will, yet he thinks this freedom is only an ideal one; or, as he affirms, an admirable species of contrivance invented by the Deity for the purpose of making the doctrines of morality understood and practised by us.

The "*Principles of Morality and Natural Religion*" was a performance very severely criticised when it made its first appearance. It was supposed to contain matter of a very objectionable kind. The author was accused of favouring the doctrines

* Principles of Morals, p. 63.

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of Hobbes and Collins, principally from the manner in which he treated of necessity. I beg to observe, that I have here used the first edition; for in the second, the author omitted all the objectionable passages, but in the third, they were again replaced as in the original edition.

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CHAPTER XXI.

BISHOP BUTLER.

ANALOGY OF NATURAL AND REVEALED RELIGION.

Dr. Joseph Butler was born at Wantage, in Berkshire, in the year 1692. His father was a substantial and reputable shopkeeper in that town, and observing marks of genius in his son, wished to give him an education for entering into the ministry of the Presbyterian persuasion. For this purpose, he was sent to a dissenting academy near Gloucester, but which was soon afterwards removed to Tewkesbury. Here he made extraordinary progress in the study of divinity; of which he gave some remarkable proofs in some letters he wrote to the famous Dr. Samuel Clarke, on some points connected with that celebrated divine's arguments for the being and attributes of God.

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After long and serious consideration of the principles of non-conformity, he determined to quit the dissenters, and connect himself with the Established Church. He removed accordingly to Oxford, and was admitted a commoner of Uriel College on the 17th March 1714. Here he became acquainted with a Mr. Talbot, through whose influence he got to be appointed preacher at the Rolls. In 1726, he published "Fifteen Sermons preached at that Chapel." By the influence of Dr. Talbot, bishop of Durham, our author was presented with the Rectory of Haughton, near Darlington, and afterwards to that of Stanhope in the same diocese. In 1736, he was appointed clerk of the closet to Queen Caroline; and, in the same year, he presented to her Majesty a copy of his excellent treatise, entitled, "*The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature.*" He was created Bishop of Bristol in 1738; and George the Second, not being satisfied with this proof of his regard for Dr. Butler, promoted him, two years after, to the Deanery of St. Paul's, London. Ten years after, he was translated to the See of Durham. His health began now to decline; and in consequence he removed to Bath, where he died in June 1752, aged 60.

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The writings of Bishop Butler, which can, with propriety, be called moral, are but brief and scanty; but they are still worthy of considerable notice, both from their intrinsic merit, and the peculiar views he entertained on the nature of moral obligation. His moral speculations are contained in his sermons, and in a dissertation prefixed to his analogy of natural and revealed religion.

The manner in which the bishop has treated of morals is precisely the same in point of principle, as the way in which he has treated of natural and revealed religion. He observes in his sixth sermon, that "there is much more exact correspondence between the natural and moral world, than we are apt to take notice of;" and this remark may be said to embody the principle from which the whole of his thoughts on morals proceed. The inward frame of man exactly corresponds to his bodily wants and condition in life; and the various passions, feelings, and emotions of our moral nature are in a peculiar manner adapted to the varied circumstances of our existence. And this single remark opens a wide and spacious field for discussion. By carefully examining the external condition of man, with his bodily structure, and his relative situation with the various objects around him,

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we are led to form many important conclusions as to the nature of the different principles which make up our general constitution, and see what is our duty to perform, and from what we ought to refrain, as well as the divers motives which should induce us to attend to the one, and be deterred from the other.

Now, in order to obtain a correct and accurate knowledge of what the inward or moral constitution of man is, we must submit this constitution to examination, and notice all the facts carefully which experience establishes from a close attention to our own consciousness, from a consideration of our external senses, and the conduct and testimony of our fellow-men. It is no province of ours to consider what might have been the constitution of our frames, or of the world at large, if it had so pleased the Almighty to have made either or both different from what we find them to be. The only thing we have to do is, to attend to what is made, and to examine and ascertain those connexions and relations which exist between our moral constitutions and physical objects, so as to enable us to follow such a course of conduct as the circumstances of our condition demand, and to unfold those general rules and principles which are necessary for enforcing

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a similar conduct on those around us. Looking, therefore, at our bodily frames, we perceive ourselves endowed with several distinct senses, with organs and instruments every way suited to their natures; we know the eye is made to see, the palate to taste, and the nose to smell,—and as we extend our inquiry into our moral constitution, we perceive certain universal feelings or perceptions, which we, on analogical principles of reasoning, consider as bearing a very strong resemblance in their nature and operation to our bodily senses. Thus the feeling of shame is to prevent us from doing things of a shameful or indecent nature; pity or commiseration for the evils and afflictions of others, induces us to render them assistance; and the passions of anger and revenge are implanted in our nature to repel those violences and insults which we may receive from others. And were we to extend our inquiries to the other passions and feelings of our constitution, we would readily perceive, that the final causes they are respectively calculated to produce, are those of promoting our well-being, and inducing us to follow a virtuous course of action, in order to secure the highest degree of happiness our situation here will admit of.

Bishop Butler is desirous to impress upon the at-

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tention of his readers, that human nature is not to be considered as a simple or uniform thing, but as made up of a multitude of different parts or principles, which are made to blend and harmonize together for a definite end or purpose; and in order to form right conceptions of our nature, and to draw correct conclusions respecting our conduct and happiness, we should make ourselves well and thoroughly acquainted with these various parts or principles, and the many ways in which they are related together. We consider our bodies not as individual or simple members, but as composed of many different senses, organs, and functions; and pursuing the analogy, we come to a like conclusion, that our moral and intellectual natures are composed or made up of a great number of instincts, passions, appetites, and propensities. And considering our constitution in a general point of view, it resembles, in many of its prominent outlines, the constitutions of several orders of the inferior creation. But, besides these things enjoyed in common; besides the senses, passions, feelings, and propensities which animals possess like ourselves; there is one thing which constitutes a very distinctive mark or feature in human nature, that which makes us in fact different beings altogether; and this

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power or faculty is sometimes called *conscience*, sometimes *moral sense*, and occasionally by the term *reflection*, and other similar epithets. This faculty or principle, (for by whatever name it may be designated is a matter of little moment, provided we understand the thing signified) exercises a controlling or judicial power, so to speak, over the whole of our passions and feelings, and renders them subservient to its own suggestions and wishes. This is a universal principle, pervading human nature under every clime, and in every condition; no possible concurrence of circumstance being ever able totally to suspend its exercise, or to usurp its authority. The degrees of its influence may vary, and may with difficulty be defined with accuracy and precision; its sphere of action may be greatly circumscribed at one place, and considerably extended at another; but its still small voice is heard throughout the earth, whether we tread in the dreary wilderness, or confine our abode to the polished city. The various powers and faculties of our nature may be compared to different communities or principalities enjoying their own internal laws and modes of government, but cemented together under one general federal head, and all bowing the knee to, and acknowledging the su-

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premacy of, one common sovereign or controlling power,—a moral sense.

As an illustration of the principles here laid down, our author observes, "that which renders beings capable of moral government is their having a moral nature, and moral faculties of perception and of action. Brute creatures are impressed and actuated by various instincts and propensions; so also are we. But, additional to this, we have a capacity of reflecting upon actions and characters, and making them an object to our thought; and in doing this, we naturally and unavoidably approve some actions under the peculiar view of their being virtuous and of good desert, and disapprove others as vicious and of ill desert. That we have this moral approving and disapproving faculty is certain, from our experiencing it in ourselves, and recognising it in each other. It appears from our exercising it unavoidably in the approbation or disapprobation even of feigned characters; from the words right and wrong, odious and amiable, base and worthy, with many others of like signification in all languages, applied to actions and characters; from the many written systems of morals which suppose it; since it cannot be imagined that all these authors, throughout all these treatises, had

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absolutely no meaning at all to their words, or a meaning merely chimerical; from our natural sense of gratitude, which implies a distinction between merely being the instrument of good and intending it; from the like distinction every one makes between injury and mere harm, which, Hobbes says, is peculiar to mankind; and between injury and just punishment, a distinction plainly natural, *prior* to the consideration of human laws." It is manifest, that a great part of common language and of common behaviour over the world is formed upon supposition of such a moral faculty, whether called conscience, moral reason, moral sense, or divine reason; whether considered as a sentiment of the understanding or as a perception of the heart; or, which seems the truth, as including both. Nor is it at all doubtful in general, what course of action this faculty or practical discovering power within us approves, and what it disapproves. For as much as it has been disputed wherein virtue consists, or whatever ground for doubt there may be about particulars, yet, in general, there is in reality a universally acknowledged standard of it: it is that which all ages and all countries have made profession of in public; it is that which every man you meet puts on the show of; it is that which the pri-

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mary and fundamental laws of all civil constitutions over the face of the earth, make it their business and endeavour to enforce the practice of it upon mankind, namely, justice, veracity, and a regard to common good. It being manifest then, in general, that we have such a faculty or discernment as this, it may be of use to remark some things more distinctly concerning it."

From the view here given of human nature, and of the universality of the *moral sense* or *conscience*, we will be enabled to put the proper construction upon such phrases, as *following nature, acting agreeably to reason,* or *following a proper and natural course,* with other similar modes of expression used by Dr. Butler, as well as many ancient and modern writers on morals. These phrases are frequently interpreted in a loose and indefinite manner, as meaning the acting agreeably to whatever passion or feeling may happen to be the prevailing and strongest one for the time being; but this is not the meaning which the Bishop attaches to these and similar expressions. But the meaning he attributes to such phrases obviously is, that virtue consists in a great measure of a proper regulation and subjection of all our appetites, feelings, passions and sympathies, to the superior controlling

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power of our consciences or moral sense; and when our actions are in unison, or in conformity to the rule which this moral sense establishes, then we can with propriety say that our conduct is natural and corresponds to the whole nature of man. The author of our existence has thus given to virtue a permanent and solid foundation, and nothing can be farther from the end of his moral government than that we should indiscriminately indulge in our passions and appetites, without any reference to that solemn and binding obligation which results from that law which he has implanted in our bosoms.

There is another point of view in which the Bishop wishes us to look at a *moral sense*, and which has led him to some very acute and valuable remarks, in regard to the nature of punishments, in his Treatise on Natural and Revealed Religion. Conscience does not only point out to us what is right and wrong, but it excites in us a presentiment or apprehension, that if we violate its dictates and trample on its authority, we shall be answerable at a higher tribunal in a future state of existence, where virtue is to receive its complete and final reward, and vice its everlasting and suitable punishment. This feeling or anticipation of retributive justice is common amongst all mankind, and mani-

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fests itself in all those rites and ceremonies, doctrines and principles, which constitute the essence of all natural religion. This feeling may exhibit various degrees of strength, and may be obscured by numberless absurd and ridiculous usages and customs; but its real existence is sufficiently well established as to entitle us to consider it as forming a constituent element of our nature.

On this topic, the Bishop makes the following very judicious and pertinent remarks. "Our sense or discernment of actions as morally good or bad, implies in it a sense or discernment of them as of good or ill discernment. It may be difficult to explain this perception so as to answer all the questions which may be asked concerning it; but every one speaks of such and such actions as deserving punishment; and it is not, I suppose, pretended, that they have absolutely no meaning at all to the expression. Now, the meaning plainly is not that we conceive it for the good of society that the doer of such actions should be made to suffer. For, if unhappily it were resolved, that a man who by some innocent action was infected with the plague should be left to perish, lest by other people's coming near him the infection should spread, no one would say he deserved this treatment. Innocence and ill

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desert are inconsistent ideas. The desert always supposes guilt; and if one be no part of the other, yet they are evidently and naturally connected in our mind. The sight of a man in misery raises our compassion towards him; and, if this misery be inflicted upon him by another, our indignation is against the author of it. But when we are informed that the sufferer is a villain, and is punished only for his treachery and cruelty, our compassion exceedingly lessens, and in many instances our indignation wholly subsides. Now, what produces this effect is the conception of that in the sufferer which we call ill desert. Upon considering, then, or viewing together, our notion of vice and that of misery, there results a third, that of ill desert. And thus there is in human creatures an association of the two ideas, natural and moral evil, wickedness and punishment. If this association were merely artificial or accidental, it were nothing; but being most unquestionably natural, it greatly concerns us to attend to it, instead of endeavouring to explain it away." *

Bishop Butler maintains, that our present and future happiness is the ultimate end of all virtuous

* Dissertation.

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actions. In his eleventh sermon, he observes, that "it may be allowed, without any prejudice to the cause of virtue and religion, that our ideas of happiness and misery are of all our ideas the nearest, and most important to us; that they will, nay, if you please, they ought to prevail over those of order, and beauty, and harmony, and propension, if there should ever be, as it is impossible there ever should be, any inconsistence between them." And again, "Though virtue or moral rectitude does, indeed, consist in affection to, and pursuit of what is right and good, as such; yet, when we sit down in a cool hour, we can neither justify to ourselves this or any other pursuit, till we are convinced that it will be for our happiness, or at least not contrary to it."

Our author has some very able and philosophical remarks between the nature of self-love and benevolence, in opposition to those writers who, on the one hand, make the whole of virtue to consist in the exercise of the benevolent feelings; and those, on the other, who resolve all our passions, affections, and sympathies into a refined kind of self-love. On descanting on this part of his subject, he endeavours to prove, from analogical arguments, that there are numerous indications throughout the

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vast scheme of nature and providence, to suppose that there is a distinct principle in our nature for the exclusive purpose of promoting the happiness and comfort of our fellow-men, and which communicates to us that pure and grateful feeling which generally accompanies the exercise of the benevolent affections. "The fact then appears to be, that we are constituted so as to condemn falsehood, unprovoked violence, injustice, and to approve of benevolence to some preferably to others, abstracted from all consideration, which conduct is likeliest to produce an over-balance of happiness or misery;—and, therefore, were the author of nature to propose nothing to himself as an end but the production of happiness, were his moral character merely that of benevolence; yet ours is not so. Upon that supposition, indeed, the only reason of his giving us the above-mentioned approbation of benevolence to some persons rather than others, and disapprobation of falsehood, unprovoked violence, and injustice, must be, that he foresaw this constitution of our nature would produce more happiness than forming us with a temper of more general benevolence. But still, since this is our constitution, falsehood, violence, injustice must be vice in us, and benevolence to some preferably to

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others, virtue, abstracted from all consideration of the over-balance of evil or good, which they may appear likely to produce."*

We have thus given a brief outline of the moral theory of Bishop Butler. To make any remarks upon it here, would only be to repeat what is elsewhere stated. But before closing our observations, it may be noticed that the principal objection which is commonly urged against the Bishop's writings, is that of their obscurity: this objection is more particularly brought against his celebrated Treatise on Natural and Revealed Religion. You scarcely meet with a reader of this book, but who will readily enough acknowledge its superior merit, but who, at the same time, qualifies his praise by a significant shake of his head, accompanied with the remark, that it is very dry, and subtile, and difficult to be understood. Now, I must confess, I have never been able to see the justice of this criticism. That the author's style is a little obscure, I am ready to grant; but when we come to look at the great value of the work in every other essential particular, and the vast and paramount importance of the doctrines therein discussed, we ought not to

* Dissertation.

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shrink from the appearance of a little intellectual labour, nor to expect that subjects which are in their own nature of such complexity, should be handled with all the easy off-hand flippancy of a novel or a book of travels. I know of no *single work* on Natural and Revealed Religion, which is entitled to be compared with Bishop Butler's; and though I should lay myself open to the charge of stepping beyond my province, I cannot refrain from embracing this opportunity of wishing that all young men would carefully, diligently, and attentively peruse this interesting volume, and make themselves masters of all the leading arguments on the topics on which it treats.

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CHAPTER XXII.

DR. FERGUSON.

INSTITUTES OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY.

Dr. Adam Ferguson was born at the manse of Logierait, of which parish his father was minister, in 1724, and received his early education at the parish school. He was made Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh, in 1759. His "Institutes of Moral Philosophy" were published in 1769; and his "Principles of Moral and Political Science" in 1792. He died in 1816.

The "Institutes of Moral Philosophy" is a very useful work for students, inasmuch as it contains a concise view of many interesting subjects of inquiry; namely, the *natural history of man, metaphysics, the principles of natural religion, the nature of moral good and evil, jurisprudence, and politics.*

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Mr. Ferguson's work, like all similar ones, which are written merely with a view of giving a condensed sketch of the nature of a course of lectures on Moral Philosophy, is but little calculated to give rise to any lengthened discussion. Theoretical statements and reasonings are, in such publications, for obvious reasons, kept as much as possible out of sight, in order that the youthful mind may not be distracted by subtile and intricate speculations, for the entering into which, with any thing like a probable chance of making himself master of them, he has not the requisite knowledge nor powers of mind. Such a work, therefore, does not afford the materials for moral discussion; but as the reader may feel a desire to know something of the "*Institutes of Moral Philosophy*," we will here give a short abstract of two or three subjects of importance, namely, the theory of the human mind—the principles of natural religion, and the nature of moral good and evil.

1st, Dr. Ferguson's notions of mental philosophy appear to be in principle, as well as in detail, nearly the same as those of Mr. Locke's. The Doctor considers the powers of the mind to be the following:—1st, *Consciousness*, which is considered to be the same as feeling. 2d, *Animal sense*, or *per-*

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ception, which is the result of the exercise of our bodily organs, as touch, taste, smell, hearing, and seeing. 3d, *Observation*, or special attention paid to any particular thing. 4th, *Memory*, that is, the recollection of perceptions or trains of thought. 5th, *Imagination* is the clothing of objects with real or fictitious qualities or circumstances. 6th, *Abstraction*, which is the stating or consideration of some qualities or circumstances apart from other qualities or circumstances to which they are actually joined by nature. 7th, *Reasoning* comprehends a classification of particular subjects, investigation, the application of general rules, the weighing of evidence, and the deducing of inferences. 8th, *Foresight* is the faculty of anticipating or conjecturing what is to follow from certain present or past events. 9th, *Propensity* is an original bias or limitation towards certain objects; such as a free and unfettered exercise of our physical powers. 10th, *Sentiment* is defined to be a state of mind relative to supposed good or evil. 11th, *Desire* and *aversion* arise from our conception of objects founded on experience, fancy or report. 12th, *Volition* is the act of willing, or the faculty of making free determinations.

2d, The principles of natural religion come next

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under consideration. The first of these is that of the *being of a God.* This is established, 1st, by the universality of this belief; and this again rests partly on a suggestion of nature, and the appearances of design, order, wisdom, and benevolence, which are so strikingly characteristic of the government of the world. 2d, The attributes of the Supreme Being are the features or characters of his moral nature, and are commonly designated by five appellations; namely, Unity, Power, Wisdom, Goodness, and Justice. 1st, The *Unity of God* is established from our perception of final causes. 2d, *Power* must be an attribute of the Great First Cause; as He who is the Creator of all things cannot be limited in His power. 3d, *Wisdom* is an attribute of the Divine nature; for it follows from, or rather may be said to be implied in, the perceptions of final causes. 4th, The *Goodness of God* is suggested to our minds from being the Creator and Preserver of all things. 5th, The *Justice of God* is derived from his wisdom and goodness, and must necessarily be perfect.

The second fundamental principle of natural religion is the immortality of the soul. This doctrine is chiefly supported on pure reason, by considering the almost universal notions of a future state enter-

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tained by men of all countries, climates, manners, and religion. The same goodness which prompted the Almighty to create us may likewise dispose him to preserve for ever his rational and intelligent offspring. The government of God is proved to be righteous; but the instinctive desire of distributive justice implanted in men's minds is not fulfilled in this life. Hence the universal belief, that wicked men will be punished, and good men rewarded, in another state of existence, beyond death and the grave.

3d, The moral law is defined by Dr. Ferguson to be "*a general expression of what ought to be;*" and in this he appears to agree with Dr. Hutcheson, that the rules of morality are referable to the same standard as the rules of art, or the canons of criticism, beauty, and propriety. The moral law, as relating to intelligent creatures, is nothing but the expression of what ought to be done. The obligation to obey this law is resolved by our author into the obligation to observe the law of nature; and the first and fundamental law is that which expresses the greatest good to men's nature; all other laws are but branches or applications of this general principle. "The terms," says Dr. Ferguson, "*good* and *evil* are applied to enjoyment and

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suffering, perfection and defect, prosperity and adversity.

"Enjoyment and suffering are opposite conditions of a sentient nature.

"Perfection and defect are the opposite conditions of an improveable or progressive nature.

"Prosperity and adversity are the opposite conditions of things contingent, in which the most fortunate have not a choice."*

The fundamental law of morality is thus laid down by Dr. Ferguson. From the foregoing estimate we may venture to affirm, that the qualities of man's nature are of more moment than any of the circumstances in which men are placed; and that the first concern of a man is to consider what he himself is, not how he is situated.

"In stating a first principle of morality, however, it is not necessary to enumerate all the valuable qualities of human nature; it is sufficient to select some fundamental article, in itself important, and leading to the whole.

"With these conditions, a principle will serve our purpose the better for being expressed in few words, provided it brings into view that which is most essential, and that which is for ever to be kept in mind.

* Institutes, p. 139.

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"Under this description we may venture to assume as a first principle of morality, that the greatest good competent to man's nature is the love of mankind.

"Benevolence, and the love of mankind, are terms nearly synonymous; but we prefer the latter in this place, as excluding pretensions to merit on account of any sentiment without an object, and as requiring at once all the efficacy of a good disposition towards those who are within its reach.

"The law of benevolence may be applied separately to mind, and to the external actions of men.

"In its applications to mind, it will lead us to enumerate the valuable qualities connected with it, whether as cause or effect; and it will lead us to complete the definition of virtue, or the description of a rational nature accomplished and happy.

"In its application to external actions, it will lead us to consider in what variety of external forms the same dispositions of mind may appear, and to mark out the tenor of conduct which the just will naturally hold."*

The "Principles of Moral and Political Science" is merely an enlargement of his Institutes.

* Institutes, p. 163.

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CHAPTER XXIII.

DR. PRICE.

REVIEW OF THE PRINCIPAL QUESTIONS IN MORALS.

RICHARD PRICE was born at Tynton, Glamorganshire, in 1723, where his father, a dissenting clergyman, resided. He was placed at one of the dissenting academies in the south, under the care of his uncle, the Rev. Samuel Price. Mr. Price was chosen minister at Newington Green in 1757, in which year he published his "*Review of the Principal Questions in Morals.*" He died in 1791.

Dr. Price's "*Review of the Principal Questions in Morals*" was a work of considerable po-

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pularity some years ago; and the propriety of its arrangement, the clearness of its style, and the high sense of virtue and piety which runs through the whole of it, must ever entitle it to an attentive and careful perusal by the moral student.

In looking into our natures as moral agents, we recognise three distinct perceptions, which seem to constitute the elementary principles of morality; and these should always be carefully kept in view in all our reasonings on the subject. First, our conception of right and wrong; secondly, our perception of beauty and deformity; and thirdly, that which we express in common language, when we designate particular actions as of *good* or *ill* desert.

Some actions we immediately, and upon the spur of the moment, pronounce to be *good*, and others *evil*; some *fit*, and others *unfit*; while others are considered as possessing no particular moral obligation, and we accordingly call them by the term *indifferent*. The grand question then is, what is this power within us which thus authoritatively pronounces its decisions on the nature of these different kind of actions?

We have already illustrated the doctrine of a *moral sense* at considerable length; and slightly hinted at some of the leading objections which Dr.

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Price advances against the existence of this faculty. His answer to the above question, What is that power within us which determines actions to be good or bad? is this, that this power is the *understanding*, and not a *moral sense*, and his principal reasons for this conclusion are the following.

1st, By the term *sense* we usually mean that power, (different from, and independent of the reasoning or judging power) which renders certain actions pleasing, and others displeasing, or those which are rendered indifferent to us. By our bodily construction we are so formed that the excitement of certain bodily organs never fails to produce certain ideas in our minds; and that in like manner, certain kinds of moral or immoral behaviour are invariably productive of pleasure or of pain. Had the advocates of this description of a *moral sense* merely meant it should stand for our moral powers generally, little or no objection could have been urged against its use in ethical inquiries; but it is obvious from the general tenor of the writings of the principal advocates of a moral sense, that they drew the analogy between it and our intellectual and physical powers too closely, and that the term *moral sense* is used by them, as indicative of a *positive moral faculty*, an *implanted* and *arbitrary*

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principle, by which a *taste* or *relish* is given to certain actions, and an aversion felt towards others, exactly corresponding to the exercise of our bodily powers of sensation or perception. It is an obvious conclusion from this doctrine, that all our ideas of moral obligation have the same origin, and partake of the same nature, as our ideas or notions respecting the sensible qualities of matter, the harmony of sounds, the beauties of painting and sculpture, &c.; that is, that our Creator has so constructed our minds and bodily organs, that when one or both become affected in a particular manner, certain feelings are necessarily awakened within us. According to this view of the subject, morality becomes a mere matter of *taste*. The terms moral right and wrong signify nothing *in the virtuous objects themselves*, to which these words are applied; no more than the terms agreeable or disagreeable, sweet or bitter, pleasant or painful, represent or stand for positive qualities in external objects. It is not proper for us to say that *bitterness* is a power or quality of an object, or that *pain* is in the fire which produces it; these terms *bitterness* and *pain* are merely used to describe *certain effects in us*. And, in like manner, the words *right, fit, good, improper, bad*, &c., when applied to moral

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actions, are used just to signify an *emotion* or *feeling*, either of a pleasurable or painful kind, from the contemplation of those actions; and if it had so pleased the Almighty to have altered the relation which now subsists between these actions and our *feelings* and *emotions*, our notions or ideas of moral obligation, fitness or propriety, would have undergone a corresponding change. The important question then is, has virtue a permanent or lasting foundation in the nature of things; do the words right and wrong represent real characters of actions, or only qualities of our minds; or, in short, do the words good and bad fully denote what *actions are in themselves*, or only stand for *sensations* derived from the particular relation and influence which subsists between external objects and our intellectual and physical constitution?

2d, If our ideas or perceptions of moral *right* and *wrong* denote what certain actions *are of themselves*, and not merely our *feelings* or *emotions* respecting them, then the power of perceiving what is the true nature of these actions must be either that faculty which is employed by us in the discovery of truth in general, or the result of some *implanted power* or *sense*. If we take the former opinion as our guide, then we establish morality

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upon an unchangeable basis, by considering it the same in its nature as truth in general; but if, on the other hand, we make this supposed *implanted power* or *sense* the standard of moral obligation, then this standard must be liable to continual fluctuation, according to the different degrees of strength or perfection of this *sense*, and the various mediums through which it is exerted. We cannot fail, therefore, to perceive, that to place morality upon a solid and immutable footing, we must consider it as the result of the *understanding*; but, in order to see this matter more distinctly, we will here make a few observations respecting the understanding and the senses.

It has been commonly the practice among writers since Mr. Locke's time, to consider sensation and reflection the sources of all our ideas. Without, however, entering into any discussion on this doctrine at present, we will just give a glance at the difference between the *understanding* and a *sense*, and endeavour to point out the nature and limits of each.

The power of the mind which takes cognizance of, and pronounces judgment upon, the various perceptions of sense, discovers the nature of the sensible qualities of matter; descants upon the ge-

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neral and minute differences between the senses; inquires into and defines the limits of their operation; and distinguishes between what is real and what is fictitious, what is of primary and what of secondary importance among the various agents which internally and externally affect us; must be acknowledged to be a power very different in its nature, and more extensive in its influence, than any thing which we usually ascribe to the nature of a *sense*. All our bodily senses have limits clearly and obviously defined; nor can any one of them materially assist another. The eye is made to see, the ear to hear, the mouth to taste, and the nose to smell; but that power or faculty which grapples, as it were, with the whole; which judges of and compares the objects of all the senses; which states facts, lays down principles, and draws conclusions relative to the nature, number, identity, diversity, &c., of these various senses and their objects, must be something very different from sense itself. "Were not *sense* and *knowledge* entirely different, we should rest satisfied with sensible impressions, such as light, colours and sounds, and inquire no farther about them, at least when the impressions are strong and vigorous. Whereas, on the contrary, we necessarily desire some further acquaintance

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with them, and can never be satisfied till we have subjected them to the survey of reason. *Sense* presents *particular* forms to the mind, but cannot rise to any *general* ideas. It is the intellect that examines and compares the presented forms, that rises above individuals to universal and abstract ideas, and thus looks downward upon objects, takes in at one view an affinity of particulars, and is capable of discovering general truths. Sense sees only the outside of things, reason acquaints itself with their *natures*. Sensation is only a mode of feeling in the mind; but knowledge implies an active and vital energy of the mind. Feeling pain, for example, is the effect of sense; but the understanding is employed when pain itself is made an object of the mind's reflection, or held up before it, in order to discover its nature and causes. Mere sense can discover nothing in the most exquisite work of art—suppose a plant, or the body of an animal—but what is painted in the eye, or what might be described on paper. It is the intellect that must perceive in it order and proportion, variety and regularity, design, connexion, art and power, aptitudes, dependences, correspondences, and adjustment of parts so as to subserve an end, and compose one perfect whole; things which can never be re-

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presented on a sensible organ, and the ideas of which cannot be passively communicated, or stamped on the mind by the operation of external objects. Sense cannot be any of the modes of thinking beings; these can be discovered only by the mind's survey of itself." *

Applying these remarks to the subject of morals, and considering our ideas of *right* and *wrong* to be simple ideas, we will readily perceive that they must be referred to some immediate perception in the human mind. This power is the *understanding*. We have seen in the preceding remarks, that this general faculty is that which guides or superintends the whole of our bodily senses, and is *itself* the source of many of the most common and familiar notions we possess, as to the nature of material objects. So, in like manner, the understanding acts the same part in our moral constitution, and furnishes us with immediate perceptions of what is right and wrong, worthy or blamable, in the conduct of mankind.

We must assume, that all human actions possess some *nature* or *essence* peculiar to themselves; they must have a character by which they are re-

* Review of the Principal Questions of Morals, p. 19.

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cognised, and which makes them an object of our moral perception, so that we can *truly* affirm or deny any thing respecting them. We know that some actions are worthy of praise, and some of censure. But if this be not true; if no actions are *in themselves* clothed with moral obligation, and become objects for the understanding; then it necessarily follows that they are *indifferent*. But is not this inference entirely contrary to our common and every-day notions of the nature of our moral duties and obligations? One can scarcely imagine that any person could bring his mind to a conclusion, that all actions are in their nature equally indifferent, and that there is no one thing more fit, becoming, praiseworthy, or lovely, than another. The clear and obvious inference which the mind of man, unsophisticated with false philosophy, would draw from such a position is, that we are warranted in doing whatever we think proper, that morality becomes entirely a matter of feeling, and that nothing is required of us as rational, moral, and religious beings, but to shape our moral conduct according to the variable and uncertain standard of mere moral *emotion* or *feeling*.

The remarks we have here made may be said to contain the sum or essence of Dr. Price's principles

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of morality. He has endeavoured to apply these principles to the subject of natural religion, and to show how completely they harmonize with some of its most important and leading doctrines, namely, the moral attributes of the Deity, the nature of his moral government, and a future state of rewards and punishments. On each of these heads we will make a few brief remarks.

That morality does not consist in *sense, moral emotion* or *sensation*, but is the fruits of the *understanding*, which is that general power which superintends, as it were, all our other faculties, physical, intellectual, and moral, is a doctrine inseparable from correct notions regarding the nature and moral attributes of the Deity. If morality be not of a fixed, unchangeable, and eternal nature, but only the object of *feeling* or *sensation*, though this might justify us in maintaining the wisdom of God in constituting us in this particular manner; yet we could have no solid grounds on which to rest the conclusion, that the Deity was of a holy, pure, and benevolent character; for we could not by any power of inference establish the position, that because we felt in a certain particular manner, agreeably to our particular organization, towards what is good and what is bad in human behaviour, that,

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therefore, the Deity himself felt in the same manner and degree towards those actions which give us moral pleasure and pain. In fact, we have no conception of what is virtuous, holy, and good in the divine nature, without we maintain that *right* and *wrong* are words which stand for things *in their own nature* of a permanent and indisputable nature. But by making virtue the effect of the understanding, we here connect what is *good*, and what is intelligent together; and as infinite *power* must presuppose infinite *intelligence*, we are entitled to infer that the goodness and holiness of the Divine character must surpass as much the goodness and holiness of man as His wisdom surpasses ours. To suppose for one moment that the Deity followed a course of action which is not *in itself right*, which is not *in its own nature good and proper to be done*, is at once to maintain that He has no character at all. But this conclusion is totally at variance with what we observe every way around us. The mere fact of creation itself, is a proof of goodness; for where we can so easily point out such marks of wisdom, goodness, and design in the constitution of nature, we are fairly entitled to maintain that the Creator must be possessed of a moral character of kindness and virtue, and must be guided by prin-

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ciples of rectitude, which must have an eternal existence in the nature of things. As to the question which has been so frequently agitated both by moralists and divines, namely, *whether all the moral attributes of the Deity be resolvable into pure benevolence*, need not, I conceive, be dwelt upon here at any great length. According to the principles already laid down, complete, eternal, and absolute rectitude must always be the ultimate principle of the divine conduct. We cannot suppose that the Almighty would ever promote the comfort or happiness of any part of His creation, but by means which are *in themselves* right, holy, and good. "But while we thus find it necessary to conclude, that *goodness* is the principle from which the Deity created, we ought, in honour to it, never to forget, that it is a principle founded in *reason*, and guided by *reason*, and essentially *free* in all its operations. Were not this true of it, or were it a mere physical propensity in the divine nature which has no foundation in reason and wisdom, and which, from the same necessity by which the divine nature is eternal or omnipresent, produces all its effects, we could perceive no moral worth in it, nor reckon it at all an object of gratitude and praise.

"Happiness is the *end*, and the *only* end con-

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ceivable by us, of God's providence and government. But He pursues this end in subordination to rectitude, and by those methods only which rectitude requires. *Justice* and *veracity* are right as well as *goodness*, and must also be ascribed to the Deity. By *justice*, I here mean *distributive justice*, impartiality and equity in determining the states of beings, and a constant regard to their different moral qualifications in all the communications of happiness to them. It is this attribute of the Deity we mean when we speak of His spotless holiness and purity. From hence arises the everlasting repugnancy of his nature to all immorality, His loving and favouring virtue, and making it the unchangeable law of His creation, and the universal ground and condition of happiness under His government. It would, I think, be a very dangerous error to consider goodness in God as undirected by justice in its exercise. *Divine benevolence* is a disposition, not to make all indiscriminately happy in any possible way, but to make the *faithful*, the *pious*, and *upright* happy."*

Benevolence, founded upon infinite wisdom and rectitude, being the leading feature in the divine character, it clearly follows, that his moral govern-

* Review, p. 432.

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ment must demand that his creatures practise virtue, with a view to their present and everlasting happiness and welfare. He must approve of good, and disapprove of evil actions, in conformity with his own character and nature. What is fair, and honourable, and lovely, and of good desert, He must love and reward; what is immoral, hateful, and odious, He must despise and punish. There must be a reference in all the decisions of the divine nature upon the actions of men, to that principle of eternal rectitude which constitutes the basis of the divine attributes, and forms the sole rule of omnipotent wisdom. "In short, if there is an intelligent Being at the head of all, who made things what they are; if moral good and evil are real and immutable differences, and not mere names and fancies; if there is a law of righteousness which the Deity regards, and according to which He always acts; if virtue deserves well, and is essentially *worthy* of encouragement, and vice deserves ill, and is a proper object of punishment; then it may be depended on, that the lots of the virtuous and vicious will be different; and that God is *for* the one, and *against* the other; or that the administration of the world is strictly moral and righteous."*

* Review, p. 440.

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But though virtue is, and always must be, in a general sense its own reward, yet the condition of the world plainly intimates to us that the connexion between virtue and happiness is not universal and perfect; that the pious and virtuous, and the wicked and the profane, enjoy a large share of this world's goods and comforts. This ought to suggest to us a future state of rewards and punishments, where a holy and good being will, in conformity with his character, give to every one according to his works. This state of existence must be considered more in the light of a state of trial and probation, than of reward and enjoyment. "A moral plan of government must be carried into execution gradually and slowly, through several successive steps and periods. —Before retribution there must be probation and discipline.—Rewards and punishments require that, antecedently to them, sufficient opportunities should be given to beings to render themselves proper objects of them, and to form and display their characters, during which time it is necessary that one event should often happen to the good and the bad. Were every single action, as soon as performed, to be followed with its proper reward or punishment; were wickedness, in every instance of it, struck with immediate vengeance, and were goodness always

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at ease and prosperous, the characters of men could not be formed, virtue would be rendered interested and mercenary; some of the most important branches of it could not be practised; adversity, frequently its best friend, could never find access to it; and all those trials would be removed which are requisite to train it up to maturity and perfection. Thus would the regular process of a moral government be disturbed and its purposes defeated; and therefore, the very facts which are made objections to it, appear, as mankind are now constituted, to be required by it. In a word, shall we, from present inequalities, draw conclusions subversive of the most evident principles of reason, though we see the constitution of the world and the natural tendencies of things to be such as will, if they are allowed time and scope for operating, necessarily exclude them? Is it reasonable to give up the wisdom and righteousness of the universal mind, to contradict our clearest notions of things, and to acknowledge errors in the administration of the Deity, notwithstanding innumerable appearances in the frame of the world of his infinite power and perfection, rather than receive a plain, easy and natural supposition, which is suggested to us in innumerable ways, which mankind in all ages have received,

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and which is agreeable to all our best sentiments and wishes?"*

We have here given an outline of the system of morality advocated by Dr. Price; we will clearly see that he combats the opinions of those who maintain that virtue is the result of a *moral sense* implanted in us. He considers *right* and *wrong* to mean something eternal and immutable in the things to which these words are applied. The *understanding* is the faculty which recognises or takes notice of what is good or bad in the conduct of men. The reader will readily perceive that Dr. Price's views are precisely the same in point of principle as those of Dr. Cudworth's; there is a little variation in matters of detail, but this is the full amount of difference.

* Review, p. 453.

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CHAPTER XXIV.

DR. ADAM SMITH.

THEORY OF MORAL SENTIMENTS.

ADAM SMITH was born at Kirkcaldy, in Fifeshire, in 1723. He obtained his elementary education at his native town; and in 1737 he went to Glasgow, and afterwards to Baliol College, Oxford, with a view of entering into the English Church. In 1751, he was elected Professor of Logic and Moral Philosophy in the University in Glasgow. He published his "Theory of Moral Sentiments" in 1759, and his other well known work on the *Wealth of Nations* in 1766. He died in 1790.

The moral theory of Dr. Smith's is perhaps one of the most pleasing and instructive performances

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which ever was written on the speculative principles of morality. Embellished with the fruits of a lively but chaste imagination, enforced by language at once dignified and simple, the reader generally becomes deeply interested in the theory of "*Moral Sentiments.*" The system possesses all the charms of a most refined and accurate analysis, and the illustrations are so apposite and agreeable to nature, that the reader seems to pass pleasantly from one step of conviction to another, until he comes to the conclusion that now he has found a theory which sufficiently accounts for all moral appearances. Indeed, so captivating is the performance now under examination, that few readers of it will be found who have not, at the termination of their labours, expressed their approbation at its excellencies, and felt deeply impressed with the truth of its leading principles.

In the familiar and every-day intercourse of human life, we must on every side perceive the great influence of moral sympathy, which is only another word for that fellow-feeling we experience in other men's joys and sorrows, tastes and humours, successes and disappointments, opinions and sentiments. This feeling developes itself in our constitutions at a very early period of our existence; in childhood

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and in youth, we enter warmly into all the feelings of those around us, and according to the strength of the benevolent principle or feeling of attachment, we are inclined to imitate the actions, and acquire the opinions, habits, and sentiments of those with whom we are upon terms of intimacy and friendship. "How selfish soever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature which interest him in the fortunes of others, and render their happiness necessary to him, though he derives nothing from it except the pleasure of seeing it. Of this kind is pity or compassion, the emotion which we feel for the misery of others, when we either see it or are made to conceive it in a very lively manner. That we often derive sorrow from the sorrow of others, is a matter of fact too obvious to require any instances to prove it; for this sentiment, like all the other original passions of human nature, is by no means confined to the virtuous and humane, though they perhaps may feel it with the most exquisite sensibility; the greatest ruffian,—the most hardened violator of the laws of society, is not altogether without it.

"That this is the source of our fellow-feeling for the misery of others, that it is by changing places in fancy with the sufferer, that we come either to

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conceive or to be affected by what he feels, may be demonstrated by many obvious assertions, if it should not be thought sufficiently evident of itself. When we see a stroke aimed, and just ready to fall upon the leg or arm of another person, we naturally shrink and draw back our own leg or our own arm; and when it does fall, we feel in some measure, and are hurt by it as well as the sufferer. The mob, when they are gazing on a dancer on the slack-rope, naturally writhe, and twist, and balance their own bodies, as they see him do, and as they feel they themselves must do, if in his situation. Persons of delicate fibres and a weak constitution of body complain, that in looking on the ulcers and sores which are exposed by beggars in the streets, they are apt to feel an itching or uneasy sensation in the corresponding part of their own bodies. The horror which they conceive at the misery of those wretches, affects that particular part in themselves more than any other; because that horror arises from conceiving what they themselves would suffer, if they really were the wretches whom they are looking upon, and if that particular part in themselves was actually affected in the same miserable manner. The very force of this conception is sufficient, in their feeble frames, to produce that itching or uneasy sensation

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complained of. Men of the most robust make observe, that in looking upon sore eyes, they often feel a very sensible soreness in their own, which proceeds from the same reason; that organ being in the strongest men more delicate than any other part of the body is in the weakest." *

Sympathy is the source of, or the principal share of our pleasures and pains, joys and sorrows; and this is finely explained by Mr. Smith—"But, whatever may be the cause of sympathy, or however it may be excited, nothing pleases us more than to observe in other men a fellow-feeling with all the emotions of our own heart; nor are we ever so much shocked as by the appearances of the contrary." "When we have read a book or poem so often that we even no longer find any amusement in reading it by ourselves, we can still take pleasure in reading it to a companion—to him it has all the graces of novelty; we enter into the surprise and admiration which it naturally excites in him, but which it is no longer capable of exciting in us; we consider all the ideas which it presents, rather in the light in which they appear to him, than in that in which they appear to ourselves, and we are

* Moral Sentiments, pp. 1—3.

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amused by sympathy with his amusement, which thus enlivens our own. On the contrary, we should be vexed if he did not seem to be entertained with it, and we could no longer take pleasure in reading it to him. It is the same case here.—The mirth of the company, no doubt, enlivens our own mirth, and their silence, no doubt, disappoints us. But though this may contribute both to the pleasure which we derive from the one, and to the pain which we feel from the other, it is by no means the sole cause of either; and this correspondence of the sentiments of others with our own appears to be a cause of pleasure, and the want of it a cause of pain, which cannot be accounted for in this manner. The sympathy which my friends express with my joy might indeed give me pleasure by enlivening that joy, but that which they express with my grief could give me none if it served only to enliven that grief. Sympathy, however, enlivens joy, and alleviates grief. It enlivens joy by presenting another source of satisfaction, and it alleviates grief by insinuating into the heart almost the only agreeable sensation which it is at that time capable of receiving." *

* Moral Sentiments, pp. 16, 17.

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Dr. Smith's theory in substance is this, that we do not *instantly* approve of some actions, or disapprove of others, whenever the intentions of the agent, or the beneficial or injurious nature of these actions is made apparent to us; but before we can feel any sentiment of approval or disapproval, we are to undergo a certain process, that of forming a conception of what we would feel if we were in some other person's situation. If a person do a good action, we sympathize with him, that is, we enter into his feelings as it were, and we feel pleasure, because we fancy he feels it also in performing the action. If a person do a bad action, we in the same manner enter into the angry and indignant feelings of the person who is affected by it, and dwell upon those sentiments which we fancy would arise in our minds, if we had been the object of this sinful and malicious action.

When we consider our own conduct, relative to the praise or blame which we think it may merit, we do so by a moral sympathy more complicated in its operations, and somewhat more difficult to trace. If we perform a good action, we immediately set ourselves to consider what others will feel or think respecting it, and we feel a pleasure at our own conduct, because we think that other people think well of what we have done. When

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we do an improper action, we feel ashamed and confounded, because we think, in like manner, that people will consider our conduct worthy of censure and reprobation; and in consequence of this supposed train of thought in the mind of others, we feel the smarts of conscience in our own. This moral sympathy acts, as it were, by a process of single and double reflection; we sympathize with another's moral actions, by imagining what would be our own feelings, if placed in their situation; and we sympathize with the sympathy of others, when our own deeds are the objects of critical inquiry. This is the leading principle on which the "Theory of Moral Sentiments" is grounded.

It has been considered rather a nice question to ascertain whether sympathy be an original power of the mind or not. Those who have questioned its being a primitive faculty, have brought forward arguments like the following. Certain things appear to our senses immediately of a pleasant and beautiful, some of a painful and disgusting nature. Some things, however, of a complicated structure, we can neither pronounce to be beautiful nor deformed, convenient nor inconvenient, until we enter into a process of reasoning, and by patient investigation examine all the particular bearings of the things or

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matters under contemplation; and in proportion as reason points out the decisions as to the subserviency or adaptation, the imperfection or incongruity of the objects themselves, we accordingly pronounce our decisions as to the relative beauty or deformity of particular things.

Now in our judgment respecting the good or ill nature of certain moral actions, something like the same process is followed. Some actions of a cruel or unjust nature immediately call forth our indignation and abhorrence; we instantly pronounce that such things are improper, and ought not to be performed. We see, however, another set of actions which outwardly bear the stamp of oppression; but when we are induced to take all matters into consideration, to weigh in the balance of reason all the circumstances connected with them, we correct our previous judgments, and begin to perceive the reasonableness and propriety of that which we had, from first impressions, been led to pronounce as immoral and improper.

It is contended that sympathy takes it rise from this habit of our mind. Sympathy, in its ordinary signification, is a feeling for those who endure suffering or pain, or experience joy or gladness. We enter, therefore, into the feelings of others,

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either of an enlivening or depressing kind, because the actions which give rise to them are of themselves calculated to create in us the same feelings as we see they do in others. In fact, this moral sympathy is nothing more than that *moral susceptibility* to be affected in a particular manner by certain moral actions. It is not, therefore, a distinct power added to our constitution, but merely a statement of a fact known and acknowledged since the beginning of man's existence, that certain actions do instantaneously, as it were, affect our moral feelings, opinions, and judgments.

We will also perceive that Dr. Smith's theory takes it for granted, that sympathy must in all cases *precede* our moral feelings and sentiments, and where there is no sympathy there cannot be any moral emotion whatever. Now it may be asked, what is this sympathy? Can it be an object of our consciousness, or of our mind's perception, without being connected with moral feelings of some kind or degree? Can we feel it, describe it, and reason about it, abstracted from those feelings of right and wrong which it is said to produce? I think a moment's reflection will convince any one, that these questions cannot be answered in the affirmative. The fact, I apprehend, will be found to be, that these

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sympathetic feelings are nothing more nor less than those simple and universal intimations of moral rectitude and impropriety which instantaneously rise up in the minds of all men, when certain actions are presented to their view.

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CHAPTER XXV.

DR. PALEY.

MORAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY.

THE REVEREND DR. WILLIAM PALEY was born at Peterborough in Northamptonshire in 1743, and educated under his father, who was master of Giggleswick school in Yorkshire. In his sixteenth year he entered the university of Cambridge as sizer of Christ's college. According to his own account, he spent the first two years of his under-graduateship happily, but very unprofitably. "I was," says he, "constantly in society, where we were not immoral, but idle, and rather expensive. At the commencement of my third, however, after having left the party at rather a late hour in the evening, I was awakened at five in the morning by one of my companions, who stood at my bed-side and said,

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" Paley, I have been thinking what a fool you are. I could do nothing probably were I to try, and can afford the life I lead; *you* could do every thing, and cannot afford it. I have had no sleep during the whole night on account of these reflections, and am now come solemnly to inform you, that if you persist in your indolence I must renounce your society." " I was so struck," says Paley, " with the visit and the visiter, that I lay in my bed great part of the day, and formed my plan. I ordered my bed-maker to prepare my fire every evening, in order that it might be lighted by myself. I rose at five, read during the whole of the day except such hours as chapel and hall required, allotting to each portion of time its peculiar branch of study." He was thus induced to relinquish the charms of company and dissipation, and to apply himself with renewed ardour to study and improvement. After obtaining his bachelor's degree, Paley accepted the situation of assistant in an academy at Greenwich, where he remained about three years. Returning to Christ's College in 1766, he was elected a Fellow of that Society, and was not long after associated in the tuition together with Dr. Law. It was here that Dr. Paley prepared those public lectures on moral and political philosophy and the Greek

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Testament, which constituted the general outlines of those works which have attached celebrity to his name.

Dr. Paley left college and married in 1776, and as his talents began about this time to be fully appreciated, his hopes of church preferment were, ere long, fully realized. The Bishop of Carlisle, who had given him a living in Cumberland, now presented him to that of Appleby in Westmoreland, together with Dalston. In 1782, Dr. Paley obtained the archdeaconry of Carlisle. He published in 1785 his "Elements of Moral and Political Philosophy," and in five years after, his Horæ Paulinæ, or Observations on the Epistles of St. Paul, appeared. In 1794 his Views of the Evidences of Christianity was published, and in 1801 his celebrated treatise on Natural Theology. He died at Bishopwearmonth in 1805.

The treatise containing the moral and political principles of Dr. Paley, has been for many years, and is now, a very popular book; but it is less susceptible of analysis than any other book on moral science which has fallen under my notice. Though the author is an able and strenuous advocate of a

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particular theory, and though that theory rests upon principles few in number, and clearly enough unfolded, yet the illustrations and remarks are of such a detached and desultory character, that the mind has little hold of the system. It is broken down into so many fragments, so to speak, that a considerable intellectual effort is necessary to keep the general principles constantly and steadily before the mind.

It has always appeared to me that Dr. Paley had a somewhat peculiarly constituted mind. Though not deficient, upon the whole, of skill for detecting and elucidating general principles, and of power to arrange them into a harmonious system, yet his mind was essentially, in all its leading features, of a matter of fact or compiling character. He delighted in matters of detail. This is sufficiently manifested by the general stamp of all his works. The peculiar cast of his mind induced him to fall readily enough in with the views and opinions of other writers, and his own good sense and correct judgment enabled him to exhibit them, on almost every occasion, in a very popular and engaging light. And this habit of mind has been of great service to his reputation and usefulness, for it has enabled him to give to the public a great deal of instructive and

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agreeable matter, and to promote correct views on many subjects of great interest and importance to mankind.

From the examination of the preceding system of Mr. Hume, it will appear obvious to the reader, that the theory of utility is decidedly the same as that of Dr. Paley's. The words utility and expediency, when used in moral science, are completely synonymous. Many of the remarks, therefore, which we have made upon Mr. Hume's doctrine, will apply with equal force to Paley's system of expediency.

But though the theories of both Hume and Paley are both the same when considered in one point of view, yet when considered in another, there is a broad line of distinction between them. Hume denied the authenticity of the Scriptures, and framed his system without any direct reference to the doctrines and precepts of morality which they contain. Dr. Paley, on the contrary, has reared his theory upon the basis of divine revelation, and endeavours to shew the harmony which subsists between the suggestions of natural reason and the will of God. The doctrine of utility, as developed by Mr. Hume, appeared to Paley grounded on too slender a basis, and as affording too weak and insufficient motives

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for restraining man from the gratification of many of his evil propensities and passions, such as lust revenge, envy, ambition, avarice, &c.; and therefore it became necessary to have a more elevated standard of virtue than mere reason pointed out, and to enforce the obligation of this more exalted code of duties, by the more weighty motives which are contained in the Scriptures, namely, a future state of existence, and rewards and punishments annexed to it. Here we perceive a great difference between the two systems now under consideration, but we must still bear in mind, that so far as the *ultimate end* or *subject* of virtue is concerned, namely, the good of mankind, the views of Mr. Hume's system are precisely the same as those of Dr. Paley's.

To furnish the reader with a concise, yet an adequate view of the moral and political philosophy of Dr. Paley, lengthened or numerous quotations are not necessary. The seventh chapter of his book, *on the nature of virtue*, may be said to contain the essence or kernel of his whole theory.

" Virtue is *the doing good to mankind, in obedience to the will of God, and for the sake of everlasting happiness.*

" According to which definition, the *good of*

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mankind is the subject; the *will of God* the rule; and *everlasting happiness* the motive of human virtue.

"Virtue has been divided by some into *benevolence, prudence, fortitude,* and *temperance. Benevolence* proposes good ends; *prudence* suggests the best means of attaining them; *fortitude* enables us to encounter the difficulties, dangers, and discouragements which stand in our way in the pursuit of these ends; *temperance* repels and overcomes the passions that obstruct it. *Benevolence,* for instance, prompts us to undertake the cause of an oppressed orphan; *prudence* suggests the best mode of going about it; *fortitude* enables us to confront the danger and bear up against the loss, disgrace, or repulse that may attend our undertaking; and temperance keeps under the love of money, of ease, or amusement, which may divert us from it.

"Virtue is distinguished by others into two branches only, *prudence* and *benevolence: prudence,* attentive to our own interest; *benevolence,* to that of our fellow-creatures; both directed to the same end, the increase of happiness in nature, and taking equal concern in the future as in the present.

"The four cardinal virtues are *prudence, fortitude, temperance,* and *justice.*

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"But the division of virtue to which we are now-a-days most accustomed, is into duties.

"Towards God, as piety, reverence, resignation, gratitude, &c.

"Towards *other men*, (or relative duties), as justice, charity, loyalty, &c.

"Towards *ourselves*, as charity, sobriety, temperance, preservation of life, care of health, &c.

"By the above definition of virtue, it appears that the good of mankind is the subject, the will of God the rule, and everlasting happiness the motive and end of all virtue. Yet a man shall perform many an act of virtue, without having either the good of mankind, the will of God, or everlasting happiness in his thoughts; just as a man may be a very good servant, without being conscious at every turn of a regard to his master's will, or of an express attention to his interest, and your best old servants are of this sort; but then he must have served for a length of time under the actual direction of these motives to bring it to this, in which service his merit and virtue consist.

"Man is a bundle of habits. There are habits of industry, attention, vigilance, advertency; of a prompt obedience to the judgment occurring, or of yielding to the first impulse of passion; of extend-

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ing our views to the future, or of resting upon the present; of apprehending, methodizing, reasoning; of indolence and dilatoriness; of vanity, self-conceit, melancholy, partiality; of fretfulness, suspicion, captiousness, censoriousness; of pride, ambition, covetousness; of over-reaching, intriguing, projecting; in a word, there is not a quality or function, either of body or mind, which does not feel the influence of this great law of animated nature.

"The Christian religion has not ascertained the precise quantity of virtue necessary to salvation. It seems most agreeable to our conceptions of justice, and it is consonant enough to the language of Scripture to suppose, that there are prepared for us rewards and punishments of all possible degrees, from the most exalted happiness down to extreme misery, so that 'our labour is never in vain;' whatever advancement we make in virtue, we procure a proportionable accession of future happiness; as, on the other hand, every accumulation of vice is the 'treasuring up of so much wrath against the day of wrath.' It has been said, that it can never be a just economy of providence, to admit one part of mankind into heaven, and condemn the other to hell; since there must be very little to choose between the worst man who is received into heaven

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and the best who is excluded. And how know we, it might be answered, but that there may be as little to choose in their conditions."

We have already viewed the system of utility under two different lights when speaking of the writings of Mr. Hume and Mr. Rutherford; and we shall now make a few remarks upon this system of Dr. Paley's, for the purpose of placing before the mind of the reader what may and has been said in opposition to the archdeacon's theory.

1st. Dr. Paley makes moral obligation to rest on an exclusive regard to our individual happiness in another state of existence; and that virtue itself, that is, *in its abstract nature*, consists of a perfect and implicit obedience to *the will of God*, as that will is manifested to us in the Scriptures. Now, it must be observed, that this view of moral obligation is not less objectionable merely because it places before us, as an incentive to virtuous action, a great and unspeakable reward. The source of virtuous action is, in this case, not the less selfish, because the happiness and honours of a future life vastly surpass, in point of magnitude and duration, the happiness and honours of this earthly and transient state of existence. Nay, on the contrary, by the fairest rules of reasoning which are recognised by

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the general voice of mankind on matters where their interests are concerned, it would clearly follow that the larger and more magnificent the benefits to be expected from any given line of moral conduct, the more interested we become, and the less disinterestedness is placed to our credit. But, besides this consideration, the theory of Paley involves a conclusion that we pursue holiness, piety, and virtue, only because we expect to be large gainers by the transaction; and we are constantly appearing before the Almighty in the low and degraded attitude of beings who acknowledge the existence of not a single particle of real benevolent feeling, either in His nature or in our own.

2d. It is maintained that the doctrine of expediency, or the loving and the performing of virtue, for the sake of the rewards which are attached to it, is destructive of all lofty and elevated conceptions of the nature and perfections of the Deity, and of that worship we ought to pay Him. We do not, upon this hypothesis, love God for holiness and benignity of character, but only as the dispenser of certain benefits, which He has it in his power to bestow upon us. We represent Him as a Being who is possessed of nothing of intrinsic excellence, which we can love and adore for its own sake; but

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what homage He receives from us, must every tittle be purchased by a portion of vastly superior benefits and favours. We carry on a species of barter with heaven, and that which we designate by the name of virtue, goodness or piety, is indeed nothing but the fruits of a traffic infinitely more mercenary and grovelling than any thing visible under the dominion of the most loathsome greediness and avarice. In fact, there can be nothing on which to rest our duty to God, if the leading principles of Paley's expediency be admitted to their utmost extent.

3d. It has frequently been observed that the doctrine of expediency, as advanced by Dr. Paley, is calculated to produce a loose kind of morality whenever it is adopted; and this opinion has received considerable countenance, in my conception, from the manner in which Paley has framed his moral treatise. From mixing political with moral philosophy, a greater scope is undoubtedly given for illustrating the principle of expediency; but at the same time, it must be admitted, that the arguments drawn from the relations which subsist between man and man, considered exclusively as members of civil society, rest upon a more uncertain and wavering foundation, than arguments drawn from those duties, feelings, and principles

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which make up, or constitute, what we mean by moral science, properly so called; and, therefore, the kind of materials by which the theory in question is supported is rather of a questionable description. Not that I mean by this remark that the science of government or politics, both general and particular, is of a doubtful character, for in this respect the leading principles of all political philosophy are as firmly seated in human nature, and are as much susceptible of demonstration, as any others connected with our constitution. But it must be obvious that, while the general principles of politics are founded as it were upon a rock, yet the matters of detail which result from their application to the science of legislation, excite in all classes of men a considerable difference of opinion; and, consequently, that arguments drawn from this source are not so readily or universally received as other arguments would be which are produced from topics, productive of less contention and excitement. There is little variation of opinion amongst the bulk of mankind, in countries tolerably enlightened, about what constitutes murder, felony, adultery, cruelty, ingratitude, oppression, or of any other of the private or public virtues; but the case is somewhat altered, when we enter into

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the province of politics, and endeavour to procure unanimity of sentiment and opinion on what are the laws of nations, the original or elementary principles of society, the just and beneficial extension or limitation of the principles of civil authority and obedience, and the many rights, duties, and obligations which arise out of the nature of private property.—Here a wide and endless field lies open to mankind for discussion, and the growth of contrary opinions; and here a man, with the principles of political and moral expediency, may make the most objectionable and pernicious use of the materials which are thus afforded him, without our being able to detect the fallacy or hollowness of his reasoning, or to excite in the bosoms of mankind a suitable portion of indignation at his conduct. The portion of utility or happiness which results from different modes of government and civil institutions, is so variable and uncertain, and depends upon so many accidental circumstances, that the advocates of very opposite systems support their views by reasons drawn from one common source; and the principles of expediency, as generally interpreted by the disciples of Dr. Paley, become the standard of appeal, to opposite political parties, and very conflicting interests. Thus a door is thrown

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open to mankind which may lead them to very incorrect and loose modes of reasoning relative to the nature and extent of moral obligation. A man wandering through the mazes of politics with only the glimmering torch of public or private utility or expediency for his guide, is like a ship at sea without either rudder or compass. Hence it is that we so commonly see in society, the man of the most perfect and heartless selfishness, and the crazy votary of theoretical delusion, each appealing in his turn, with vehemence and confidence, to the infallible rule of moral rectitude—the real or supposed advantages which are likely to flow from their respective actions and opinions.

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CHAPTER XXVI.

REV. THOMAS GISBORNE.

PRINCIPLES OF MORAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY.

THE Rev. Thomas Gisborne is perpetual curate of Barton-under-Needwood, Staffordshire, and a prebend of Durham. He is well known in literature, for his numerous and excellent writings on moral and religious subjects.

The "*Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*" were written by Mr. Gisborne with a view of counteracting, in some degree, the erroneous opinions and conclusions which he conceived were involved in Dr. Paley's system of morality. The theory of utility, and that of expediency, (which is merely a branch of it) have been already discussed at considerable length; therefore a very

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brief notice of Mr. Gisborne's views is all that is necessary here. He expresses himself as to the nature of Paley's doctrine in the following language, which embodies the general nature and tenor of his strictures on the doctor's tenets.

"I apprehend, however, that the principle of expediency is not supported in Mr. Paley's work by any proof which will stand the test of close examination; that it is liable, in the hands of men, to such misapplication and perversion, that its general reception would apparently be most unfavourable to human happiness; that it is totally incompatible with the precepts of Scripture; and that it never could be designed, nor can possibly be adapted, for the regulation of human conduct. In the following pages I shall endeavour to establish the validity of these assertions; and in place of general expediency, to substitute and apply other principles, founded on reason, confirmed by revelation, and consequently not exposed to similar objections."*

The principles which Mr. Gisborne lays down as a substitute for the loose ones which expediency furnishes, are the following, which are deducible from our common reason, and constitute the foun-

* Page 7.

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dation of the civil rights and obligations of mankind.

"1st. Every man has originally a right, by the gift of God, to the unrestrained enjoyment of life and personal freedom; and to such a portion of the unappropriated productions of the earth as is necessary for his comfortable subsistence.

"2d. He, therefore, who deprives another of these gifts, or restrains him in the enjoyment of them, except such deprivation or restraint is sanctioned by divine authority, is guilty of an act of injustice to the individual, and of sin against God.

"3d. Every man originally has authority from God to deprive another of these gifts, or to restrain him in the enjoyment of them in the following cases, and those only:

"1. When in so doing he acts according to the express will of God.

"2. When he proceeds in such deprivation and restraint so far, and so far only, as is necessary for the defence of the gifts of God to himself, or in defence of the gifts of God to those whom he is bound by natural ties to protect, or those by whom his aid is solicited or deemed acceptable, against attacks unauthorized by God.

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"3. When he proceeds to such deprivation or restraint, in consequence of the consent of the individual suffering it.

"4. Every man sins against God who does not act in such a manner with respect to the use, defence, and disposal of his rights, which have been established in the preceding propositions, *as he is of opinion* will, *on the whole, fulfil most effectually the purposes of his being.*"

It is when we examine into that department of morality which goes under the denomination of *justice*, that men are led into difficulties by the advocates of expediency. Our relations in society, and the duties which result from them, are so numerous and complicated, that we cannot trace them to the general abstract principles of right and obligation, which reason points out to us, and revelation enforces. Hence it is, that as the advocates of utility and expediency furnish us, or pretend to furnish us at least, with a rule or standard by which the value of our actions is to be determined, we are very easily led to avail ourselves of it. It is here that the disciple of Paley becomes formidable; and we have an instance of this in the concluding part of Mr. Gisborne's fourth proposition, which is marked by italics. A man is to regulate his conduct in such

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a way, "*as he is of opinion, will, on the whole, fulfil effectually the purposes of his being.*" Here a man must have a standard of some kind, by which he is to estimate what will, *upon the whole*, be conducive to the great end of effectually fulfilling the purposes of his being; and that the standard which will, in nine cases out of ten, present itself to his mind as the readiest, will be that of the utility or benefit which *he thinks* will accrue to himself or the community, from what he performs.

Mr. Gisborne combats with considerable ingenuity Dr. Paley's objections to the political theory of a *social contract*, and I think the former has decidedly the better of the argument.

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CHAPTER XXVII.

MR. JEREMY BENTHAM.

INTRODUCTION TO THE PRINCIPLES OF MORALS AND LEGISLATION.

MR. JEREMY BENTHAM was a Barrister at law, of Lincoln's Inn, and brother to General Sir Samuel Bentham. Mr. Bentham has now for nearly half a century been known to the public for his writings on subjects principally connected with law and politics. He died in 1832.

Mr. Bentham's moral speculations were sent forth to the world to effect a mere secondary object, that of clearing the way for certain systems of legislation, and reforms in law. The author had projected several treatises on jurisprudence and government, but he found that without a comprehensive and exact knowledge of the principles of moral obligation and duty, these works would, to the majority of readers, be but very imperfectly understood.

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Mr. Bentham's theory of morality is that of utility. He has pushed this principle to its utmost limits; but as we have already discussed this theory, all that is necessary here, is merely to state the author's views in the concisest manner possible. In the first paragraphs of his "Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation," he maintains that "Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, *Pain* and *Pleasure*. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do. On the one hand, the standard of right and wrong, on the other, the chain of causes and effects are fastened to their throne. They govern us in all we do, in all we say, in all we think; every effort we can make to throw off our subjection, will serve but to demonstrate and confirm it. In words, a man may pretend to abjure their empire, but in reality he will remain subject to it all the while. The *principle of utility* recognises this subjection, and assumes it for the foundation of that system, the object of which is to rear the fabric of felicity by the hands of reason and law. Systems which attempt to question it, deal in sounds instead of sense, in caprice instead of reason, in darkness instead of light."

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CHAPTER XXVIII.

MR. WILLIAM GODWIN.

AN ENQUIRY CONCERNING POLITICAL JUSTICE, AND ITS INFLUENCE ON MORALS AND HAPPINESS.

WILLIAM GODWIN is the son of a respectable dissenting minister at Guestwick, Norfolk. He was educated at the Dissenters' College, Hexton, and in 1778 began to officiate as minister at Showmarket, Suffolk, where he continued till 1782, when he laid aside his clerical character, and removed to London, in order to pursue literature as a profession. He is the author of many popular works, and is at this moment (1833) still in possession of a vigorous mind.

Mr. Godwin's book entitled "*An Enquiry concerning Political Justice, and its Influence on Morals and Happiness,*" excited, at the period of its publication, a considerable portion of attention among philosophers, as well as the reading public at large. Its principles and reasons were keenly

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examined; and, perhaps, no book has appeared in modern times, of such a philosophical and abstruse character, which has given rise to a greater diversity of opinion, or more opposite and conflicting sentiments. But in later years, this once comparatively popular treatise has ceased to be read or noticed; and the distinguished and able author has now to witness, what is more or less painful to all authors, that he has himself outlived the fame and reputation of a favourite production.

It cannot be supposed that a complete abridgment or analysis of the "Political Justice" can be given here; for there is such a multiplicity of topics treated of by the author, and he has supported his views with illustrations, (to use a metaphor,) drawn from the four winds of heaven, that it would require a person well versed in all matters of learning connected with human nature, to profit by or relish the publication in question. Indeed, to treat of many parts of this work would be evidently stepping beyond our province; for we would have to descant on legislation, diplomacy, metaphysics, and many other subjects besides, which are, in a great measure, foreign to the nature and plan of this publication. We will therefore confine our remarks to a few leading topics connected with Mr. Godwin's

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views of the nature and extent of moral obligation.

It has always been considered an interesting topic of discussion, to endeavour to ascertain the degree of influence which particular kinds of government exercise over our moral characters. No one who will dispassionately look at the nature of man, and his relative situation as the member of a civil community, but who will readily allow, that the government under which it is our lot to live, must give a tone and colouring to our moral habits and feelings; and that a reciprocal connexion must thereby be established between our moral behaviour and the nature of that government which will exercise, in all circumstances, a powerful influence over our sentiments and opinions. All history exhibits the effects which civil institutions produce in our ideas of good and evil, and in the judgments we form of the conduct of mankind. Though the commonly received theories of government rest upon a negative principle,—that of restraining the wicked, the lawless, the cunning, and the powerful, from invading the rights and privileges of the well-disposed, the peaceable, the simple, and the defenceless among our race; yet the weighty and ostensible reason which lawgivers advance for the

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establishment of social institutions is, that the virtue and happiness of men will be increased; and in exact proportion to the wisdom and justice which are incorporated into these institutions, is our advancement in the scale of moral rectitude and social improvement. This is one of the commonly received maxims respecting the nature and moral influence of governments; and it is firmly and amply established, by the concurrent testimony of all sacred as well as profane history. Where the social institutions of a country are in unison with the moral principles of our nature, the greatest benefits may be anticipated; but when, on the contrary, they are calculated to delude and impoverish mankind, an exclusive attention to private improvement cannot be expected to bear up against that overwhelming torrent of demoralization which is produced by extensive and erroneous legislative measures.

One of Mr. Godwin's principles is, that the moral condition of mankind depends solely upon their social and political institutions; and if these were brought to that degree of perfection of which they are susceptible, misery and vice would disappear from the face of the earth. He says, "A wide field of speculation opens itself before us. If government thus insinuates itself in its effects into

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our most secret retirements, who shall set limits to its operations? If it be the author of thus much, who shall say that it is not the author of the whole? May it not happen, that the grand moral evils that exist in the world, the calamities by which we are so grievously oppressed, are to be traced to its defects as their source, and that their removal is only to be expected from its correction? May it not be found, that the attempt to alter the morals of mankind singly and in detail, is an erroneous and futile undertaking; and that it will then only be effectually and decisively performed, when, by regenerating their political institutions, we shall change their motives, and produce a revolution in the influences which act upon them? To prove the affirmative of these questions shall be the business of this first book.

"The method to be pursued for that purpose shall be, first, to take a concise survey of the evils existing in political society; secondly, to show that these evils are to be ascribed to public institutions; and thirdly, that they are not the inseparable condition of our existence, but that human nature admits of their removal and remedy."*

* Political Justice, pp. 4, 5.

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I cannot allow the truth of the principle involved in these remarks to its fullest extent. There can be no doubt but moralists have taken frequently a very limited and imperfect view of the moral nature of man, and of his capacity of improvement, by paying an exclusive attention to the individual and private virtues; and entirely excluding from their calculations the moral force which governments exert over our every-day character and behaviour. But that all our vices and miseries arise *solely* from the imperfections of governments, and erroneous principles of legislation, is a position so manifestly outrageous, that we are fully warranted in maintaining, that the author who could solemnly put it forward, must be under the influence of a desperate love of system, and must have viewed human nature through a very distorted and bewildered medium. The truth will, I am persuaded, in this instance, as in other speculations where opposite principles are maintained, be found by steering a middle course. Public instruction and private improvement exercise over each other a reciprocal influence; and if we wish to improve the condition of mankind on an extensive scale, we must connect in our labours, social with individual instruction, and consider man as a member of a great commu-

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nity, as well as an insulated being. This is the only true principle on which to rest that practical system of philosophy which has for its object the moral and physical improvement of our race. It may not be in our power to calculate, with fractional exactness, the share of influence which governments and private instruction respectively exert over mankind, nor need we set a high value on any attempts for the accomplishment of such an object; but this we must be convinced of, that if we look upon man merely as a private being, or as a member of a community, our moral philosophy will be found to rest upon too slender a basis, and it will be in vain for us to effect any improvements in the conduct of man, worthy of notice, when we leave out of our consideration one-half of the nature of his being.

The social principle of man is of that nature that it cannot be confined to the mere circle of his own family, but it draws him into intimate communion and fellowship with larger bodies of his own species. This union is powerfully prompted by the nature of his wants, the dangers of an insulated condition, and the watchful solicitude which he always manifests towards promoting his ease and comfort, and preserving his existence. Out of this social confe-

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deracy, arises many of the most important duties of life,—duties, in fact, of a most exalted nature, and which are invested with a force of moral obligation of a very decided and important character. The virtues of love of country, resignation and cordial obedience to constituted authorities, public spirit, love of liberty, and the sacrifice of even life itself for the promotion of the public weal, could have no existence in a state of solitude; and therefore it is that our social passions and propensities give birth to a series of virtuous actions, which ought at all times to form an interesting topic for the consideration of the moralist. It is on this account that political philosophy becomes so closely and indissolubly connected with the moral duties and happiness of mankind.

It becomes us, therefore, to pay great attention to legislative measures, and particular forms of government, as these are very powerful auxiliaries in the cause of moral regeneration. An unwise and tyrannical government, never was, nor ever can be, connected with a virtuous and intelligent people. The thing is impossible—a complete solecism in morals. Can we look for prudence, economy, industry, sobriety, and good neighbourhood, among a community, where the acts of its govern-

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ment have a direct tendency to produce social distrusts, jealousies, poverty, and misery? Can we look for patriotism, public spirit, a devoted attachment to those in authority, and an ardent love of peace and justice, among a people, when its rulers act the part of tyrants, and violate every principle of equity and humanity? The thing is perfectly impossible; as well might we look for the scorching heat and luxurious foliage of a tropical climate under the arctic circle. It cannot, therefore, be too deeply impressed upon the attention of all those who are directly engaged in reforming the conduct of mankind, by teaching them their moral and religious duties, that they are bound to pay every degree of attention to sound and rational principles of legislation and jurisprudence; and, while they avoid the erroneous notions of Mr. Godwin, that political regeneration is the *only* method of eradicating all the evils of society, and making men perfectly happy on earth, they must not overlook the beneficial consequences which will most certainly result from making our social institutions in strict conformity with right reason, and those sound maxims of government, the result of extensive experience, which have received the sanction of the wisest and the best of men. Mr. Godwin com-

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plains, and complains justly, that we are pursuing a mistaken plan, to think of reforming mankind by confining our efforts of improvement exclusively to their private condition. This is to commence the good work of moral reformation at the wrong end.

Mr. Godwin is an advocate for that dazzling but deceptive doctrine—the infinite perfectibility of man,—a doctrine which has now, I dare say, few advocates. He grounds his hopes of progressive moral improvements upon the changes which man has already effected in his condition, from a fierce wanderer in the woods, till he has become the polished and enlightened inhabitant of the great city. But the principal ground on which Mr. Godwin rests his notions of perfection is, the improvement which might be introduced into all our social institutions and modes of government. This opinion is in strict unison with the general principles laid down in the "Political Justice." If all the ills of life result from bad government,—and the science of government, like every other, is susceptible of great and indefinite improvement,—then the inference is manifest, that the moral regeneration of the human race will exactly keep pace with the progress of the science of legislation. "Let us suppose man

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to have gained the two first elements of knowledge—speaking and writing; let us trace him through all his subsequent improvements, through whatever constitutes the inequality between Newton and the ploughman, and indeed much more than this, since the most ignorant ploughman in civilized society is infinitely different from what he would have been when stripped of all the benefits he has derived from literature and the arts. Let us survey the earth, covered with the labours of man—houses, enclosures, harvests, manufactures, instruments, machines, together with all the wonders of painting, poetry, eloquence, and philosophy.

"Such was man in his original state, and such is man as we at present behold him. Is it possible for us to contemplate what he has already done, without being impressed with a strong presentiment of the improvements he has yet to accomplish? There is no science that is not capable of additions; there is no art that may not be carried to a still higher perfection. If this be true of all other sciences, why not of morals? If this be true of all other arts, why not of social institutions? The very conception of this as possible is in the highest degree encouraging. If we can further demonstrate it to be a part of the natural and regular progress of the

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mind, our confidence and our hopes will then be complete. This is the temper with which we ought to engage in the study of political truth. Let us look back, that we may profit by the experience of mankind; but let us not look back, as if the wisdom of our ancestors was such as to leave no room for future improvement."*

There has always appeared to me something very contradictory in Mr. Godwin's notions, about *self-love* and benevolence. He maintains the existence of a pure benevolent principle in our natures; but contends it is resolvable into habit. He observes: "But it is the nature of the passions speedily to convert what at first were means into ends. The avaricious man forgets the utility of money, which first incited him to pursue it, fixes his passion upon the money itself, and counts his gold without having in his mind any idea but that of seeing and handling it. Something of this sort happens very early in the history of every passion. The moment we become attached to a particular source of pleasure, beyond any idea we have of the rank it holds in the catalogue of sources, it must be admitted that it is liked for its own sake. The man

* Political Justice, p. 118.

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who pursues wealth or fame with any degree of ardour, soon comes to concenter his attention in the wealth or the fame, without carrying his mind beyond, or thinking of any thing that is to result from them.

"If this be the case in the passion of avarice, or the love of fame, it must also be true in the instance of beneficence, that, after having habituated ourselves to promote the happiness of our child, our family, our country, or our species, we are at length brought to approve and desire their happiness without retrospect to ourselves. It happens in this instance, as in the former, that we are actionally actuated by the most perfect disinterestedness, and willingly submit to tortures and death, rather than see injury committed upon the object of our affections." *

Now, agreeably to the common notions we entertain respecting the nature of habit, we suppose that the more complete and decided the habit is, the less of intention is incorporated in it. Mr. Godwin affirms, that without intention there can be no virtue; and his objection against the system of self-love is grounded upon the consideration that

* Political Justice, p. 426.

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this passion, like many others, is supposed to operate on the mind by virtue of its own strength, and to *drive* us to action, *without the exercise of voluntary intention.* The account which he gives of benevolence is, I think, very meagre and insufficient, and entirely unworthy of the name it bears.

The "*Inquiry into Political Justice*" is a work, as we have already noticed, which has given rise to very decided and contrary opinions and sentiments among speculative writers. The first edition contained very objectionable and erroneous doctrines, several of which, in a subsequent impression of the book, were entirely expunged. This showed a love of truth, and a candid disposition. But these concessions to sounder principles has had but little influence over many of his critics, who have taken their tone from the first edition, and who seem not to have been much inclined to give the author any credit for his conscientious change of principle. And it must be owned that even in the last edition of the Treatise, (which I have used for my remarks) there is a great deal of objectionable matter, and a great deal besides of what may be called fanciful and trifling. But what could be expected from a system reared up independent of any principle of religion, either natural or revealed; and

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which was put forth too under the ostensible plea of promoting the individual and political happiness of man? This Treatise bears about as much relation to what a work on personal and political virtue ought to be, as a marble statue does to a living body. The author intimates in his preface, that he had been considerably influenced in his opinions by the writings of *Helvetius*, *Rousseau*, and the work entitled *Systeme de la Nature*. It is no wonder, then, that the stream should partake so largely of the turbid impurities of the fountain.

But it would be uncandid not to allow that there is great ability displayed in the "*Inquiry*." Throughout many parts of it there are strewed very acute and just remarks. The author shows in every thing he handles, a vigorous and original mind, and a sincere and ardent love of virtue and truth; and we cannot help regretting that such high intellectual and moral endowments as he possesses, should, in his early philosophical career, have been employed in disseminating doctrines of such questionable soundness and utility.

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CHAPTER XXIX.

PROFESSOR DUGALD STEWART.

OUTLINES OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY, &c.

DUGALD STEWART was the son of Dr. Matthew Stewart, formerly professor of mathematics in the University of Edinburgh, and was born there in 1753. In the eighth year of his age he was sent to the High School, and at the age of thirteen hewas entered at the College under the care of Dr. Blair and Dr. Ferguson. When only eighteen years of age, he read lectures for his father, and he continued to assist him till his death. During the absence of Dr. Ferguson in America, Mr. Stewart officiated in the chair of moral philosophy, and when the Doctor resigned in 1784, the situation was conferred upon Mr. Stewart, which he filled until 1810, when he resigned in consequence of his declining years. He died in 1828.

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We come now to notice one of the most able and elegant moral writers of whom Great Britain, or any other country, can boast. The great difficulty which every writer must feel, who purposes treating of his merits, is the total inadequacy of the ordinary language of commendation, to express the worth of his rare intellectual endowments, and his profound and familiar acquaintance with every department of mental and ethical philosophy. His labours, both as a popular lecturer on moral science for nearly twenty-three years in the University of Edinburgh, and as a writer, have contributed to form an important era in the history of that department of knowledge which he cultivated; and many of the brightest literary ornaments of the present day feel a becoming degree of pride to acknowledge their obligations to him, both as an author and an academical instructor.

The mind of Mr. Stewart was singularly well constituted. Its merit did not consist so much in any one faculty being possessed in a very remarkable degree of perfection, but in the strength and symmetry of all its parts, and in the architectural beauty, so to speak, which arose from the harmonious combination of all the individual portions of his intellectual structure. The grand and leading fea-

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ture of his mind was good sense; or, as it is sometimes called, common sense; which is by no means so common an acquisition, even among philosophers, as its name would seem to imply. Accordingly, we find he was no desperate lover of theories,—no dealer in splendid chimeras, or dazzling sophisms,—no patron of verbal quibbles or trifling conceits, of startling paradoxes, or incomprehensible dogmas; but on every topic he pursued the steady even tenor of his way, guided by a manly freedom of inquiry, and a sound judgment, which were always sufficient to preserve him from rash speculations and childish puerilities. When he is led into discussions in conformity with the prescribed routine of his profession, possessing comparatively little interest, he carefully avoids becoming tedious; and to every question that comes before him, he gives that proper and just share of attention which its intrinsic merits demand. Subjects, in their own nature, of considerable intricacy and subtility, were made plain and interesting by the charms of an easy and graceful eloquence of style, which no expounder of mental philosophy who had gone before had ever employed, and which no succeeding writer has been able to surpass.

Mr. Stewart's writings being chiefly confined to

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the philosophy of the mind, it is to be regretted that we have so scanty a work from his pen on morals as his "Outlines of Moral Philosophy." This work comprises the mere heads of lectures, and is, therefore, liable to all the objections against any lengthened discussion of its principles which we urged against Dr. Ferguson's "Institutes."

Professor Stewart divides our moral powers into two great divisions,—the active and passive powers. The active principles of our nature are hunger, thirst, curiosity, ambition, pity, resentment, &c. Our author arranges them under the following general heads:—

1st, Appetites. 2d, Desires. 3d, Affections. 4th, Self-Love; and, 5th, The Moral Sense.

1st, Appetites are three in number, Hunger, Thirst, and the Appetite of the sex. They all take their rise from the body; and are common to us with the lower animals.

2d, Desires do not operate periodically like our passions, nor do they cease on the attainment of a particular object. Mr. Stewart divides our desires into five:—1. The desire of knowledge, or the principle of curiosity. 2. The desire of society. 3. The desire of esteem. 4. The desire of power, or the principle of ambition; and, 5.

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The desire of superiority, or the principle of emulation.

3d, Affections are those active principles in our nature, whose direct end or purpose is to communicate either happiness or suffering to some of our fellow-creatures. Affections are, in consequence, commonly divided into two classes,—the benevolent, and the malevolent. To the former belong parental affection and filial affection. The affections of kindred, love, friendship, patriotism, universal benevolence, gratitude, pity to the distressed; to the latter, or malevolent affections, belong jealousy, envy, revenge, misanthropy; but several writers, and Mr. Stewart is among the number, consider all these as only modifications of the general affection of resentment.

4th, Self-love is an active principle, very different in its nature from those we have just now enumerated. Mr. Stewart observes:—"In prefixing to this section the title of self-love, the ordinary language of modern philosophy has been followed. The expression is, however, exceptionable; as it suggests an analogy, (where there is none in fact,) between that regard which every rational being must necessarily have to his own happiness, and those benevolent affections which attach us to our

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fellow-creatures. The similarity, too, between the words self-love, and selfishness, has introduced much confusion into ethical disquisitions.

" The word selfishness is always used in an unfavourable sense; and hence, some authors have been led to suppose, that vice consists in an excessive regard to our own happiness. It is remarkable, however, that although we apply the epithet selfish to avarice, and to love and private sensuality, we never apply it to the desire of knowledge, or to the pursuits of virtue, which are certainly sources of more exquisite pleasure than riches or sensuality can bestow."

5th, The moral sense, or faculty, is considered at great length by Mr. Stewart. His opinions on the nature of this power are similar to those entertained by Bishop Butler on this subject.

The various branches of our duty, which result from our active powers, are the following:—

1. Our duty to our Creator,—and this involves three great principles, namely, the existence of a Deity, His moral attributes, and the immortality of the soul. Mr. Stewart treats of all these matters in much the same strain of argument as that employed by Dr. Ferguson, in his " Institutes of

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Moral Philosophy," which we have already noticed. A repetition is therefore unnecessary here.

2. The duties we owe to our fellow-creatures are principally the three following,—benevolence, justice, and veracity, which last comprehends under it, candour, and uprightness of character. The duties we owe to ourselves, such as prudence, temperance, and fortitude, are requisite both for enabling us to discharge our social duties, and for promoting our own happiness. Mr. Stewart has some very beautiful and just remarks on this part of his subject; but they are too extended for insertion here. We must, therefore, refer the reader to the "Outlines" themselves.

The author's recent publication on the *Philosophy of the Active Powers*, is grounded upon the same views as are developed in his "*Outlines*." The former work may be considered as a mere transcript of the latter.

The leading principle which runs through the whole of Professor Stewart's moral speculations is, in substance, precisely the same as that advanced by Cudworth, Butler, and Price. *Virtue, moral obligation, duty*, and such like expressions, represent certain thoughts which are instantaneously

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excited in the mind, when certain actions are contemplated by it; and, in like manner, what is *vicious, morally improper*, and so forth, stand for thoughts excited in our frames by certain actions of a contrary nature. All that we know about these ideas of right and wrong is, that they do with unerring certainty produce pleasure or pain in our bosoms; but farther than this, our philosophy will not lead us.

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CHAPTER XXX.

DR. COGAN.

PHILOSOPHICAL TREATISE ON THE PASSIONS, &c.

THOMAS COGAN, a medical gentleman, is still living, though far advanced in years, at or near the city of Bath. He is the author of several works on medical subjects, as well as those on morality. His "Philosophical Treatise on the Passions" was published in 1800, and his "Ethical Treatise of the Passions" in 1807.

As we have examined, at considerable length, under the head of Dr. Hutcheson, the nature and offices of the passions; it would be little more than mere repetition, to enter, with any degree of minuteness, into the merits of Dr. Cogan's treatise. But,

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for the sake of connexion, and for the use of those who may not have seen this author's work, we will give here a brief analysis of his publication.

In the account which Dr. Cogan gives of the passions, he seems to differ from several writers, principally, however, on matters of arrangement. The following classification of our passions is adopted by him. " Some of our passions and affections are inspired by circumstances, which more immediately relate to *ourselves*, and to our own personal interests; that is, they belong to the principle of self-love; some of them belong to the *social principle*, and refer to our connexions with our own species, or to all animated nature.

" In some of our passions and affections, the ideas of *good* are obviously predominant, in others the ideas of *evil*.

" The passions and affections which relate to *self-love*, and are excited by the idea of a good, may either refer to the good which is *actually in our possession*, and communicates various degrees of enjoyment, from simple gratification to ecstasies; or,

" The good we love *may not be* in our possession; but it may appear attainable, and become the object of our desire; or,

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"Though it be not in our possession, circumstances may appear highly favourable to our attaining it, and it may thus inspire *hope*.

"The state in which *evil* is the predominant idea referring to ourselves, may relate—

"To the *loss* of that good which we possessed, or to *disappointments* respecting the good we desired and hoped to attain; inspiring *sorrow*, with its various modifications, or,—

"We may be *apprehensive* concerning the loss of what we possess, concerning the approach of some positive evil, or concerning the accomplishment of our desires, which introduces the family of *fear*.

"The cause of both sorrow and fear may be some agent, whose designed conduct, or even whose inadvertency may threaten or produce injuries, and thus excite *anger* in various degrees.

"The causes and excitements of our passions and affections respecting *others*, may also be arranged under the predominancy of good or evil in our ideas.

"Under the former head may *benevolence* be placed, which will indicate itself either by *good wishes* or *good opinions*; each productive of a

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large diversity of affections and passions, according to contingent circumstances.

" The predominance of evil in our ideas will show itself in actual *malevolence* of disposition concerning another; or in *displacency* and disapprobation of conduct."*

Dr. Cogan is of opinion, that *surprise* is the efficient cause of passion. It is maintained, " that whatever strikes us in a sudden and unexpected manner, makes a more vivid and lasting impression than things of much greater moment with which we have become familiarized, or which have been introduced to our notice in a gradual manner. These considerations united, make it highly probable, that the essential and characteristic difference between a *passion* and an *affection* depends upon the superaddition of surprise to the natural effect produced by the real or supposed quality of an object; and this emotion, conjoined with the specific nature of its *exciting* cause, is naturally the efficient cause of a passion; the percussion of surprise rendering the affection visible by characteristic signs correspondent with its specific nature." †

* Philosophical Treatise on the Passions, pp. 43 and 44.

† Ibid. p. 182.

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In the author's "Ethical Treatise on the Passions," there are some very excellent observations; but, for the reasons already assigned, it would only be a needless repetition to comment at any further length on the book.

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CHAPTER XXXI.

DR. THOMAS BROWN.

LECTURES ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE HUMAN MIND.

Mr. Thomas Brown was born in Gallowayshire in 1778. At an early age he was sent to Edinburgh, and attended upon the class for moral philosophy, then under the care of Professor Dugald Stewart. At the early age of eighteen, Mr. Brown published an answer to Dr. Darwin's Zoonomia, a work which, considered as coming from the pen of a mere schoolboy, gave evident marks of great and early talents. Though he prosecuted his studies with the view of following the medical profession, yet, on the resignation of Mr. Stewart, he accepted of the chair of moral philosophy in 1810. After a lingering illness, Dr. Brown died in 1820.

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The lectures of Dr. Brown, on the "*Philosophy of the Mind*," form rather an interesting and important work in the present state of moral and metaphysical science. They were delivered in the University of Edinburgh with much gracefulness and effect; but were not published till after the author's death.

To understand properly Dr. Brown's moral theory, it will be necessary we should take a glance at his "*Philosophy of the Mind*," for his moral principles are a mere transcript of his intellectual or mental ones. Avoiding as much as possible all extraneous and incidental topics mixed up with his general speculations, we will come at once to the leading maxims on which his views depend. And the principal of these is, that there are not any independent and separate faculties of the mind, apart from the mind itself, as the language of almost all the metaphysicians who preceded him would seem to imply; but that these faculties or powers were merely indications of *certain states* of the mind. These distinct faculties could not be said to be conversant with *the objects* of our mental perceptions, but really in themselves constituted all that we ever did, or can know of the mind itself.

To show, in as clear a manner as possible, the

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statements respecting distinct mental powers, against which the arguments of Dr. Brown are directed, we will make a familiar illustration of the state of the controversy between him and his predecessors on this point. We will take from the mental systems of those authors who immediately preceded him, three of their simple faculties of the mind,—Perception, Attention, and Abstraction. *Perception* is the faculty of perceiving external objects, and is generally considered the first faculty of the mind in the common systems of mental classification. *Attention* is the act of dwelling upon the object or objects perceived. *Abstraction* is the power, we are told, of considering one or more objects of mental perception apart from others. It is of no consequence to the argument whether these be quite correct definitions of these faculties; it is sufficient that they be substantially so. Now, these are considered as simple and distinct faculties, the existence of which our consciousness is said to make known to us; and accordingly it must be presumed that they can be conceived as possessing a distinct nature, and individuality of operation. But how stands the matter when we come to describe these distinct faculties, or endeavour to form a conception of their singleness of operation? There must

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be *attention* involved in the very act of perception, because we must *attend* to that which is perceived; and, on the other hand, *perception* must be likewise involved in the act of attention. Besides, there must in abstraction be both a *perception* of the object so set apart by the mind for exclusive consideration, and an *attention* to it also. By this view of the matter, we see clearly that none of these faculties can be considered as distinct simple powers, as each one of them is involved in the operation of every other one. An appeal, therefore, to consciousness does not warrant us to assert that there are any distinct powers of the mind, such as metaphysicians are in the habit of describing.

I think it has been from a consideration of these difficulties about the nature of faculties, here slightly hinted at, that had induced Dr. Brown to set himself so much in array against the common methods of speaking and writing of the mind, and had suggested the notion, that a better and more simple method might perhaps be found out of treating the phenomena of our intellectual natures. Dr. Brown, in substance, maintains that we can only view the mind in a naked state. We are just beings that are conscious of ideas, or feelings, or perceptions, call them what you will, and this is all that we

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know of our minds; and whatever may be urged in favour of general laws or principles of the mind, the existence of such laws and principles must be always problematical at best, for we can never be conscious of their mode of operation.

I will not trouble the reader with any further discussion on this controversy, or give any opinion as to its merits, but will merely state that the view of our mental nature, taken by Dr. Brown, led him, it appears to me, by a very natural route, to apply the same principles of simplification to our moral constitution. We are to consider our moral nature in the same light as our mental. Instead of dividing our moral constitution into different parts, under the denomination of distinct and independent faculties, powers, or affections, we ought to consider these terms as only indicative of certain *particular states* of that constitution. An analysis of our moral opinions, feelings, or desires, shows us, it is affirmed, that we ought to look upon them as only varying in their vividness, and relation to time, from a state of simple and uniform *moral emotion*.

"In surveying," says Dr. Brown, "either our own conduct, or the conduct of others, we do not regard the actions that come under our review as

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merely *useful* or *hurtful*, in the same manner as we regard inanimate things, or parts even of our living mental constitutions, that are independent of our will. There is a peculiar *set of emotions*, to which the actions of voluntary agents give rise, that are the source of our moral sentiments, when considered in reference to the actions that excite them. To these *emotions* we give the name of *moral approbation* or *disapprobation*,—*feelings that are of various degrees of vividness*, as the actions we consider are various. The single principle upon which these feelings depend, is the source of *all our moral notions*,—*one* feeling of approbation, variously regarded in time, being all which is truly meant when we speak of *moral obligation*, *virtue*, and *merit*, that, in the works of ethical writers, are commonly treated as objects of distinct inquiry; and that, in consequence of the distinct inquiry to which they have led, and the vain attempts to discover essential differences, where none truly exist, have occasioned so much confusion of thought and verbal tautology, as to throw a sort of darkness on morality itself. Instead, then, of inquiring first what it is which constitutes virtue, and then what it is which constitutes merit, and then what it is which constitutes our moral obligation to do what we have seen to

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be right and meritorious; we found that one inquiry alone was necessary,—*what actions excite in us*, when contemplated, *a certain vivid feeling*,—since this approving sentiment alone, in its various references, is all which we seek in these verbal inquiries." "Moral obligation, *virtue*, *vice*, *right*, *wrong*, *merit*, *demerit*, and whatever other words may be synonymous with these, all denote, then, as you perceive, *relations to one simple feeling of the mind*,—the distinctive sentiment of moral approbation, or disapprobation, which arises on the contemplation of certain actions, and which seems itself to be various, only because the action of which we speak or think, meditated, willed, or performed, is variously regarded by us in time, as *future*, *present*, *past*."*

We have already noticed, when speaking on the *moral sense*, that by this doctrine was only meant a *susceptibility of moral emotion*; and if this be correct, then the views of Dr. Brown exactly coincide with the sentiments of those writers who have adopted the theory of a distinct moral faculty.

The ultimate law into which our author resolves all mental phenomena, is that of *suggestion*; that

* Lectures, Vol. iv. p. 148.

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is, that certain things have the power of suggesting or creating in us certain *states* or *conditions* of mind. I here consider the word suggestion to mean *to create, to have the power to do, to produce;* and I think no one can for a moment look upon the word suggestion to stand for any thing else. If this, therefore, be the right interpretation of this word, I can see nothing in Dr. Brown's speculations that ought, in reference to principle, to be considered as either very important or very novel.

I think it would be no very difficult matter to draw some sceptical conclusions from the premises of Dr. Brown; against which, had he been alive, he would have been the very first to have raised his voice. His system is nearly allied, if not completely identified, with those adopted by several French writers, who have resolved every thing into mere sensation, and who have been, by all our best moral writers in England, considered not very orthodox in their mental and moral creeds. Dr. Brown maintains that every thing relating to our minds and moral natures is only indicative of certain changes in *the state of the mind*, and in our *moral powers;* and *Helvetius*, for example, affirms that our mental operations are merely *sensations*,

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and our moral feelings are resolvable into mere *sensibility*. Now, wherein lies the difference here? I should consider that philosopher very clever indeed at detecting shades of differences, who could point out any difference between Dr. Brown's *mere states of the mind*, and *his various degrees of vividness in our moral emotions*, and the *sensations*, and *moral sensibility* of the French author now alluded to.

I can see no advantages which can possibly result from the language Dr. Brown has employed to supply the place of that used by his predecessors. The employment of the words *suggestion*, *a susceptibility of moral emotion*, *a vividness of moral feeling*, &c., can throw no additional light over the operations of our mental or moral natures. Nay, when these terms are used to express indiscriminately every intellectual operation and virtuous feeling, they become positively grating to the ear, as well as bewildering to the understanding. It is from the constant ringing the changes upon these phrases, that such a cloudy haziness has been spread over his whole lectures.

But how curiously does it appear to our minds when Dr. Brown's theory is reduced to practice, or when it is estimated by that common sense, or

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common way of thinking and talking on moral and mental subjects which is so firmly rivetted in the judgments of the mass of mankind. According to his notions, the simple act of perceiving a man standing at my window, and that act of the understanding which enables me to demonstrate the truth of the difficult problem in mathematics, or the most complicated questions in morals and legislation, are just to be considered merely as different *states of the mind.* And in moral subjects, the man who performs the every-day virtue of paying his servant what is due, and the man who, by his skill or bravery, diffuses happiness over thousands of his fellow-men, are only to be distinguished from one another, as differing in a greater or lesser degree of *liveliness*, or *vividness* of *feeling*, or of *moral emotion.* And, in like manner, the man who commits a slight assault upon my person, and he who deluges a whole country with blood, are only removed a few degrees from each other in the scale of *emotion* or *feeling.* This is all that is meant by moral obligation, and virtue, and vice, and merit, and demerit, and rewards and punishments, both in this life and that which is to come! How odd does all this sound in our ears. O philosophy! what strange notions are put forth under your

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name and under your authority. Instead of being the handmaid to common sense, how often have you played the harlequin! and in the room of being the lover of wisdom, as your name would seem to imply, how often have you coquetted with the chimeras of an ill-regulated imagination, and fostered error at the expense of truth!

But notwithstanding these defects as to principle, the "Lectures" are entitled to hold a respectable station on moral subjects. There is a vein of pure piety and virtue running through the whole; and no reader can rise from the perusal of Dr. Brown's volumes, without feeling respect for the character of the author, though he may dissent from his doctrines. The great defect, however, in Dr. Brown's Lectures, is their want of perspicuity. What a striking contrast does he exhibit to his predecessor and tutor Dugald Stewart! In perusing the writings of the former, our attention is perpetually upon the rack to catch his precise meaning; in the latter, it very rarely happens indeed that we have any trouble to understand the author, or to see the whole drift of his argument. Dr. Brown is always wishful to appear the Professor, and to avoid familiarity of language, as if he considered it fatal to his reputation. Like a thorough-

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paced courtier, he never likes to be seen but in full dress. However simple and natural the idea he wishes to convey to his readers may be, he must, in the expression of it, appear either as the subtile and profound philosopher, or the poet and man of sentiment and feeling. Some of his most ingenious illustrations, and finest thoughts, groan beneath the weight of words. Had he not been so ambitious of being considered an original thinker, his great natural talents, and varied acquirements, would have made him a much pleasanter, and a more instructive writer than he is. But he was fired with the prospect of exploring new regions of thought and feeling, and by a natural train of thinking he was led to imagine, that new views and ideas would not look well in old garments, and he would have therefore to weave a more modern dress to correspond with their fancied novelty and importance. Hence it is, that in spite of his rich stores of polite literature and vigorous imaginative powers, it is a perfect herculean task to get through his Lectures; and many time and oft does the mind, like some weary pilgrim in a sultry climate, sigh for some convenient resting-place, to renovate its exhausted energies, from the overstrained exertions to which it has been subjected.

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CHAPTER XXXII.

DR. DEWAR.

ELEMENTS OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY AND CHRISTIAN ETHICS.

THE Rev. DANIEL DEWAR, D. D. has, for some years past, been minister of the Tron Church in Glasgow; but has very recently been promoted to fill the situation of Principal to Marischal College, Aberdeen.

Modern philosophers on morality, have, in general, exhibited in their writings, great shyness in recognising the authority of the moral rules and precepts found in the Scriptures. Many of the most eminent theoretical moralists have so carefully excluded every allusion and remark to the divine record of truth, that if we had not known

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the fact through some other channel than their writings, we might have lived and died without the knowledge that such a book as the Bible was in existence. Yet their systems are put forth to exhibit the value of morality, to strengthen our moral principles, and to point out the path of happiness to man! What strange inconsistency! But it unfortunately happens that the motive for this total silence about the nature of the Scriptures is, in many writers, but too apparent; they have been more eager to publish their own fancies and conceits, than the words of truth and soberness.

There are, however, other writers, who have recognised the authenticity of the Scriptures, and yet have not thought it necessary to make every use of the doctrines and moral rules contained in them to strengthen or elucidate their respective moral theories. But Dr. Dewar is free from a charge of this nature. His "*Elements of Moral Philosophy and Christian Ethics*," is grounded upon the principle that the Scriptures are the true and genuine revelation of the will of God to man; and the author incorporates religious doctrines and rules of duty with moral precepts, and pointedly shows the light which they mutually reflect upon each other.

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The first three chapters,—on the advantages arising from the Study of Moral Philosophy; on the Moral Qualifications necessary for prosecuting it; and Explanatory Observations, are master-pieces of reasoning, and cannot fail to communicate to every attentive reader a large portion of pleasure and instruction. Dr. Dewar's work is, in all its parts, one of the most important which can be put into a theological student's hand. The perspicuity of the style, the clearness of the reasoning, the copiousness and richness of illustration, and the spirit of candour which breathes through the whole, render his performance one of the most valuable religious and ethical compendiums which is to be found in British literature.

Dr. Dewar is an advocate for a moral faculty, in a certain qualified sense. His own words on this occasion seem to embody the leading principle which runs through the whole of his moral speculations—"My own opinion is, that as morality is a thing to be understood as well as felt, and as its elementary principles are intuitive judgments, so simple that they cannot be made clearer, and so essentially involved in the exercise of our faculties, that their truth is assumed in all our reasonings on moral subjects, we are entitled to refer the origin of our

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ideas of right and wrong to a combination of the understanding, and what may be termed *moral susceptibility*. My reasons for so thinking are, first, that morality is at once the object of the understanding and the heart, the judgment and the affections. Secondly, though reason, if sufficiently enlightened, would lead us to the same conclusions respecting the moral qualities of actions, viewed in their tendencies to produce happiness or misery, as are forced on us by an original moral faculty; yet we know that in other cases the defects of reason are supplied by appropriate affections and desires; and it is natural to suppose that a similar provision has been made to quicken our moral judgments, and to impress the heart with a more vivid sense of duty. Thirdly, the proper exercise of all faculties, according to their true and original design, consists in our employing them either mediately or immediately in promoting our own virtue and that of others; and, consequently, we might expect that there would be connected with our nature, in addition to reason, an active principle to prompt us to what is right, and to punish us in doing what is wrong.

"For these reasons, and several others which might be named, I am inclined to think that there

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is superadded to our understanding a moral capacity, principle or power, *and that all our moral sentiments take their rise from the combined exercise of these two faculties of the mind.* As the intuitive judgments of common sense have been termed the fundamental laws of belief, I would propose to denominate our moral judgments the fundamental laws of moral feeling and belief. They are involved in the exercise of the powers of the human mind, and are necessarily implied in all our reasonings concerning moral truth and obligation."*

Dr. Dewar is an advocate for immutable and eternal moral distinctions; and as far as I can form an estimate of his opinions on this point, he seems to coincide with Drs. Cudworth and Price. Dr. Dewar observes—"Man has a perception of the qualities of actions, as morally right and wrong, in consequence, not of arbitrary appointment, but of eternal distinctions, which are antecedent to all law, and to which laws of every kind owe their force and obligation. His perceptions of right and wrong direct the qualities of actions as they really and necessarily are, and not what they are in vir-

* Elements of Moral Philosophy, vol. i. p. 430.

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tue of an arbitrary decree, or power, or enactment."*

The Doctor has examined the principles of utility as advocated by Mr. Hume, and those of expediency by Dr. Paley, at considerable length; but from both systems he dissents.

But, leaving these topics treated of by Dr. Dewar, I will now come to mention the doctrines of philosophical necessity and free-will. It would be considered an unpardonable omission in a work of this kind not to give an outline of the famous controversy on the merits of these two systems. I have not hitherto entered into this subject, partly from a wish to confine my remarks till near a close, and partly from a desire to treat the matter under the head of Dr. Dewar's work. As he appears to be friendly to the doctrine of necessity, knows the subject accurately, and possesses, besides, a great degree of candour, as the general tenor of his "*Moral Philosophy*" sufficiently testifies, I feel a peculiar pleasure in stating my own opinion on this celebrated discussion under the cover of his name. I do not mean by this to set myself in hostile array against him, with a view of correcting him on this

* Elements of Moral Philosophy, vol. ii. p. 9.

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controverted point, for I have not the presumption to think I am qualified to enter the lists with this able author with any chance of success; but I feel it a more agreeable task to make a formal appeal to a living author, than to deliver my opinions under the name of one who is now no more.

There is a commonly prevailing opinion among many persons of considerable knowledge and reflection, that the doctrines of necessity and free-will are merely matters for speculative amusement, and not doctrines which, *in themselves*, have any direct reference to subjects of any real weight or importance to men. But this, I conceive, is, in some measure, a mistaken notion. All history bears ample testimony to the importance which men of all ages have attached to these questions. The freedom or constraint of the human will has been a topic of eager discussion since the first dawn of philosophy and religion among our race. The question, in all its direct and indirect bearings, forms two-thirds of the bulk of all the speculative philosophy of ancient and modern times; and with respect to natural and revealed religion, the whole history of both groans under the weight of controversies on these subjects. A mere enumeration of them would fill a large volume; but we may, ne-

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vertheless, allude to a small number of these controversies, for the mere purpose of placing them upon record in the reader's mind, and to show him that, had they not possessed some inherent qualification of interest, speculative whim or conceit never could have given rise to them. Passing over the contests among the ancients as to the freedom of the will, and the degree of influence which they conceived their respective deities directly and indirectly exercised over the destiny of the human race, we will come at once to the period when Christianity became firmly established. Towards the close of the fourth century of the Christian church, we find the Pelagian and Semi-Pelagian heresies exciting eager and vehement discussions throughout the whole religious community. The disputes which the writings of Augustine, who was the principal opposer of these doctrines, occasioned, both as to their nature and meaning, added considerably to the aggregate bulk of this theological mass of disputation, which diffused its baneful effects over many succeeding centuries. Then came the disputes between the Jansinests and the Jesuits, relative to free-will, the influence of grace, and the eternal nature of the divine decrees; and these disputes were carried on with so much pertinacity and

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violence that the stoutest heart for controversial warfare must sink by a bare sight of their voluminous nature. To which may be added the consideration, that even at this day, the question of man's free agency divides the Christian church into two parties, under the denominations of the Calvinistic and Arminian systems; while the present state of moral and metaphysical philosophy furnishes ample testimony that the doctrines now under consideration are as far removed from a unanimous or satisfactory decision, as they were two thousand years ago.

The prescience or fore-knowledge of God, is one of the attributes of his nature. We cannot conceive a Deity, without investing Him with the power of foreseeing all events. Nothing, therefore, could have been otherwise than it has been, or is at present. All the operations of nature, and all the thoughts, feelings, desires, and actions of men, were all planned and ordained before the foundations of the world.

Now an important question arises here, Is God the author of sin? The answer to this question is, that the Almighty would certainly be the author of evil, if a *physical necessity* were meant; but this is not the case. God has done every thing which

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is consistent with the general arrangements of his providence to lead men into paths of virtue and happiness. Every thing which the divine Being has ordained is either good in itself, or calculated to be turned to some salutary purpose. The good or the evil of human conduct must therefore depend upon the manner in which these means for virtue and happiness are used. It is only when he uses these means improperly; when he wishes to obtain happiness by different methods than those which divine Providence has prescribed, that he feels the effects of his iniquities by experiencing suffering and misery.

Philosophical necessarians maintain that the will of man must always be influenced by the last determination of the understanding; that is, we are so constituted that we must first determine that a certain thing is good or eligible, before we can choose it; and that in consequence, this will cannot be said to be free in its determinations, inasmuch as it is influenced either by previous habits, or by the consideration of that which is most desirable. That we are influenced by motives, is most certain; if we were to affect to despise them, we should not be entitled to be called rational beings. We are constituted so as to be affected by various external

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things in a particular manner; our appetites, passions, and feelings prompt us to pursue or avoid particular lines of conduct; and a great part of what we call knowledge, is only making our conduct harmonize, with the whole course of nature, and the arrangements of providence.

M. Leibnitz and Dr. Jonathan Edwards have shown, that if the mind were to choose without a motive that there could be no such thing as moral evil in the world; for moral evil consists in a wrong choice, and if there be nothing to correct the choice, how can it be said to be wrong?*

Mr. Hume has remarked, that the doctrine of philosophical necessity is only another name for that portion of human knowledge which consists in tracing the course of nature, as well as human affairs; and it is in this way that we can pronounce, with the most perfect confidence, that men will act in a

* "Dans le fond, bein loin que ce soit montrer la source du mal moral, c'est vouloir qu'il n'y en ait aucune. Car si la volonté se determine sans qu'il y ait rien, ni dans la personne que choisit, ni dans l'objet qui est choisi, qui puisse porter au choix, il n'y aura aucune cause, ni raison de cette election: et comme le mal moral consiste dans le mauvais choix, c'est avouer que le mal moral n'a point de source du tout. Ainsi dans les regles de la bonne metaphysique, il faudroit qu'il 'y eut point ne mal moral dans la nature; et aussi par la meme raison, il n'y auroit point de *bien moral* non plus et toute la moralité seroit detruite."—*Remarques sur la Livre de l'Origine du Mal.*

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certain given manner, when they are influenced by certain motives; just with the same unerring precision that the husbandman calculates upon his corn springing up, and ripening to perfection, if the ground be prepared, and the seed sown, in a proper manner. Mr. Hume observes, "It is universally acknowledged, that there is a great uniformity among the actions of men, in all nations and ages; and that human nature remains still the same in its principles and operations. The same motives always produce the same actions; the same events follow from the same causes, ambition, avarice, self-love, vanity, friendship, generosity, public spirit; these passions, mixed in various degrees, and distributed through society, have been, from the beginning of the world, and still are, the source of all the actions and enterprises which have ever been observed among mankind."*

The reader will readily perceive, that this is a most important doctrine, and supported by eminent philosophical authority, as well as by arguments which, *considered as mere arguments*, must for ever remain unanswered. Bishop Horsley has given us some important views of this controversy, which are worthy the consideration of disputants

* Hume's Essays, vol. ii. p. 80.

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on both sides. "So far as these necessarians maintain the certain influence of moral motives as the natural and sufficient means whereby human actions, and even human thoughts, are brought into that continued chain of causes and effects, which, taking its beginning in the operations of the infinite mind, cannot but be fully understood by him; so far they do service to the cause of truth; placing the great and glorious doctrines of foreknowledge, and providence, absolute foreknowledge, universal providence, upon a firm and philosophical foundation. But when they go beyond this, when they would represent this influence of moral motives as arising from a physical necessity, the very same which excites and governs the motions of the inanimate creation; here they confound nature's distinctions, and contradict the very principles they would seem to have established. The source of this mistake is this, that they imagine a similitude between things which admit of no comparison, between the influence of a moral motive upon the mind, and that of mechanical force upon matter. A moral motive and a mechanical force are both indeed causes, and equally certain causes each of its proper effect; but they are causes in very different senses of the word, and derive their energy from the most opposite principles."

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The principal charge brought against this doctrine of necessity by the advocates of liberty is, that upon the scheme of the former there can be no use of means, no exhortations, promises, or threatenings; no motive to individual exertion, but a strong temptation is thus held out to a vicious indulgence of our passions and appetites; for a man cannot be said to be an object of either reward or punishment for doing that which was ordained from all eternity to be done, and which has been brought about by means over which he could have no control.

It seems to be a point acceded to now by all parties in this dispute, that any thing like *physical necessity* is entirely inconsistent with all ideas of moral responsibility and accountableness; and the only tenable principle on which necessarians now ground their system, is on that of a *moral necessity*, and not a physical one. In this opinion, Dr. Dewar, in his notes to the first volume of his "Elements of Moral Philosophy," seems to concur. *Moral necessity* has been supported with many very ingenious and subtile arguments, by several authors of great merit; but I must confess, that these arguments, though disposed to view them in the most favourable light, from the quarter from which they emanate, have not succeeded in making me perceive the dis-

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tinction between a physical and *moral necessity*, so far as the mere abstract principle is concerned. I have noticed this distinction in a recent publication, and shall make no apology in making a quotation on this point. "Our idea of necessary connexion is a simple, uncompounded, unalterable, and undefinable idea; an idea which may change from object to object, but which never assumes any other appearance to the mind, so to speak, but one. This idea or notion may be connected with material objects, with moral objects, or mental objects; but this idea, notion, conception, thought, or by whatever name it may be called, of necessary connexion, maintains the same fixed and unchangeable character. What is, or can be, meant by moral necessity? If it mean any thing, it must mean, that objects are connected or bound together by a principle of connexion as indissoluble and fixed as that which we conceive links together the causes and effects in the material universe. I here call this necessary connexion or principle of causation, a *notion* or *conception*; I only do so in a qualified sense, and in conformity with the established rules of language. This notion or thought ought to be termed an object of belief only; for it is like many other simple elements of mind, more an object of faith than an object of

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perception; using the word perception in the same sense we usually do when we speak of *perceiving* the primary or secondary qualities of matter." "I see a man follow a certain line of conduct, and I see poverty, misery, and distress of mind follow that conduct. I see not the principle of connexion between the moral cause and the moral effect; but my belief in that connexion is just as firmly established, in my mind, as any physical connexion can possibly be. Now, let any man attend to what passes in his own mind, and see what difference he can discover between the connexion which subsists among material objects and that which exists among objects of a moral kind. I feel confident he will, on a moment's consideration, find he can conceive no difference at all."*

Some writers have imagined that this controversy is altogether a controversy about words, and that all parties are entirely, or at least nearly, agreed upon the leading principles of the dispute. But this I conceive is an erroneous opinion. The source of the dispute must be deeper than in mere

* Essay showing the intimate connexion between our notions of good and evil, and our conceptions of the freedom of the Divine and human wills, p. 196.

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verbal ambiguities, it must lie in ideas or notions themselves. It is altogether inconceivable how men should for ages dispute and cavil about the mere meaning of words; if there were not some universal mental conceptions, in which contradictory propositions were involved. I readily grant that much of the controversy may be traced to the natural imperfections of language; but this ought to serve as an intimation that the dispute must be based upon some elementary conceptions which are not susceptible of analysis or definition. Every man of common sense knows what is meant by *necessity* and *freedom*; these terms are constantly upon his lips, and they stand for ideas as accurately defined to his understanding as any he possesses; but let him take up Mr. Hobbes and Bishop Bramhall, and listen to their definitions of liberty and necessity, and he will soon find himself in a labyrinth, from which a whole life of intense study would not be sufficient to extricate him.

The most successful method which, I think, can be adopted to show the insufficiency of the necessarian scheme, is to analyze our conceptions of religion, moral praise or blame, rewards and punishments. This is the plan I have followed in a recent

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publication,* and to which, if the reader wishes for full information on this point, I beg leave to refer him. I have there endeavoured to show that our conceptions of just and equitable laws, of worship and obedience to our Creator, our estimate of public and private virtue and intellectual character, all depend upon the *notions* we have of the freedom of the will; in fact, that we estimate the value of all religious obedience and worship, moral virtue and intellectual excellence, in exact degree to the portion of free-will which we are led to suppose is incorporated with our devotional, moral, and intellectual performances. I cannot refer more particularly here to what I have written on the subject; but I will, for the reader's satisfaction, devote two or three pages to an analysis of our passions, appetites, and affections, and which analysis has been suggested by reading a portion of Dr. Dewar's book now before me.

Men never confer any great praise upon a person for following the bent of his inclinations, or for doing merely as others do, even if the course followed be the right and proper one. We always talk, on such occasions, that virtue lies solely in controlling

* See the Essay just noticed above.

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and managing the passions, and in surmounting difficulties. When we see, for example, a man who bears slander and contumely with patience and cheerfulness, it greatly heightens our opinion of him, if we learn that he is a person who has inherited from nature a highly testy and choleric disposition. The story told of Zopyrus, the physiognomist, is strikingly illustrative of this remark. He pretended to know people's characters by their faces. Some of Socrates' scholars brought him to their master, whom he had never seen before, and asked the physiognomist, what sort of man he thought their master was? Zopyrus, after carefully examining his features, pronounced Socrates to be the most debauched, lewd, cross, and selfish fellow he had ever met with; an opinion which excited nothing but laughter and ridicule amongst the company: "Hold," says Socrates, "he is in the right and you are in the wrong, for I was by nature every thing he describes, and if you are led to a different conclusion now, it must be because I have succeeded in some measure to correct my nature by study and the practice of philosophy." Does not this little incident in the life of Socrates teach us what are the common and every-day notions of virtue, and how closely and indissolubly ideas of control and

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self-denial are connected with deeds of a praiseworthy and virtuous kind?

The doctrine of free-will is strikingly exemplified in those more obvious classifications which are made of our moral powers by philosophy. First, We have the appetites, as eating, drinking and the desire of propagating our species. These appetites are not considered so exalted and ennobling, as some other affections and principles of our nature. It is somewhat difficult to tell, upon any of the common theories of moral action, how mankind have come to speak so irreverently and contemptuously of our more common and vehement desires; for certainly if the value of any passion were estimated by the importance or utility resulting from its exercise, then these passions of low degree ought to stand very high indeed in our estimation. But utility, either apparent or real, is not the standard of value in this case, and we must seek elsewhere for a more plausible theory for the solution of this question. The only foundation, I conceive, for our common appetites holding so low a station in our esteem, is, that they have more the appearance of mechanical agency about them, and are conceived to be less under the influence of our wills, than many other affections and desires of our nature. These appetites

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are common to us with the inferior orders of creation; their gratification is enforced by strong and often overwhelming impulses; and when they seem to be indulged without a proper restraint, and consequently not under the due control of our voluntary powers, we designate this gratification by the terms brutish, vulgar, indecent, &c. words pointedly descriptive of powers placed at a considerable distance from the perfect and complete authority of our more lofty and rational faculties.

But though our appetites are possessed by us in common with inferior creatures, their gratification may not only be considerably heightened, but a degree of virtuous reputation may be connected with their indulgence, when allied to other powers of our nature, which possess a less decided mechanical complexion, and are consequently considered more directly under the will; and this forms the great distinction between civilized and savage life. The man of savage life gratifies his appetites whenever passion suggests; he appears to be guided by no superior controlling principle above the beasts which surround him; and therefore he is not any way restrained by considerations of refinement, decency, and expediency, which exercise so powerful an influence over the gratification of all our appe-

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tites in a state of civilization. It is one of the conspicuous effects which is produced by an increase of knowledge, and a successful cultivation of the more exalted moral and intellectual principles of human nature, that our grosser desires become subdued, and are more directly and completely placed under the guidance of our wills. Not that we are to suppose that the authority of the will becomes ever so effective as to be able to extinguish the appetites of our nature altogether. This is not possible; nor would it be wise or beneficial if it were so. It is only a limited influence which a proper cultivation of our more lofty powers can exercise over our sensual desires; and it is for this reason that we always speak and talk of them with considerable reserve, and mete out a very small portion of approbation or praise to their best regulated and temperate indulgence.

In what are generally termed our moral affections, the consideration we bestow upon them, and the portion of free-will which we suppose is incorporated with them, is not less striking than in our bodily appetites. We confer praise or blame more liberally upon them than upon our appetites, because we conceive all our affections or emotions of a moral kind to be more centered in ourselves, so to speak,

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or to be more directly under the authority of our voluntary powers. The benevolent affections, such as parental affection, esteem of kindred, love, friendship, patriotism, universal benevolence, gratitude, and pity; as also the malevolent affections of hatred, jealousy, envy, revenge, and the like, are all considered by mankind to occupy a more elevated station in the scale of our moral nature than our grosser appetites. Notwithstanding the consideration that a few of these affections are possessed by the inferior orders of creation, in common with ourselves, the exercise of our various affections, whether of a benevolent or malevolent character, is productive of nine-tenths of our pleasures and pains, and is also the fruitful source of a great portion of our approbation and censure. These affections have less of a fixed, regular, or mechanical appearance about them, and are always on this account more immediately and directly referred to the individual himself, and to his inward power of self-control, than the animal propensities of his nature.

It is not less curious than instructive to view the fabric of our moral constitution. First, we find the animal appetites possessed nearly in the same degree and perfection by all mankind, forming the ground-work of the building; and by their strength,

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permanency, and regularity of operation, insuring the stability of the edifice. Over these the will has but a limited power. Then come the affections and emotions—a vast superstructure of very diversified appearances, which the eye of the curious inquirer into human nature scans over with a mingled and compound feeling of joy, pain, and amazement, and which has been reared, in its prominent outlines, with all due attention to architectural beauty and strength. Here the will of man has a more extended field for its operations; we attribute to its action all that is virtuous or vicious, all that is lovely or deformed; and we portion out our praise or censure in exact proportion to the voluntary effects which we suppose have been made in forming what may be either perfect or defective in collective or individual character. Lastly, we see the higher and more ennobling principles of natural and revealed religion giving a polish and finish to the whole structure, filling up the rugged outline with graceful ornaments, and conferring a harmony, consistency, and beauty on the whole man, which are eminently calculated to excite the loftiest conceptions of Him to whom all adoration and praise are due.

Let us now turn to the practical effect of the

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doctrine of necessity; and this part of our subject is, I think, worthy our most serious attention.

There is, I conceive, a general principle running through the writings of most of sceptical writers, and it is this, to make as extensive a use of the doctrine of necessary connexion as possible, by representing the whole of nature under the similitude of a vast chain; that all actions and events are linked together; that man, in every light in which he can be viewed, is only a being who has his part in the general drama to perform, and that he forms a small but intregal part of the universal machine.

As this principle involves weighty and interesting considerations, we will devote a few pages to its examination. Professor Stewart, in his Dissertation prefixed to the Encyclopædia Britannica, observes, "Whatever may have been the doctrines of some of the ancient atheists about men's free agency, it will not be denied, that in the history of modern philosophy, the schemes of atheism and of *necessity* have been hitherto always connected together. I cannot help adding, that the most consistent necessarians who have yet appeared, have been those who followed out their principles till they ended in Spinosism, a doctrine which differs from atheism more in words than in reality."

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Dr. Dewar, in a note attached to the first volume of his "Elements," expresses his dissent from this opinion of Mr. Stewart's; and seems to think that the assertion, that necessarians and atheists are nearly allied to each other, is not borne out by facts. There is no writer, in modern times, who has given such unequivocal proofs of his intimate acquaintance with the history of moral science as Mr. Stewart; and from his general candour, and his reluctance, at all times, to speak hastily or dogmatically on any subject of which good and clever men may be led to take opposite views, I am inclined to think the opinion he has here advanced is worthy of our serious attention, and ought to have great weight in deciding our judgment on the point at issue. I am fully convinced in my own mind, that, let the principle of necessary connexion be viewed in every possible light, *and merely as an abstract principle*, it will be found to exert an unfriendly and hostile influence against the leading doctrines of natural and revealed religion. But as this manner of stating the argument may be liable to objections, and various misapprehensions respecting the force of the abstract doctrine may take place, I conceive the most satisfactory method would be to appeal at once to *facts;* by shewing, from the history of phi-

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losophy, what degree of connexion there has hitherto subsisted between those who have taken a conspicuous station in advocating the doctrine of philosophical necessity, and those who have, in divers degrees, and in divers ways, promulgated opinions and sentiments hostile to the fundamental articles of natural and revealed religion.

And this is, I conceive, the most proper and satisfactory method of endeavouring to settle this important question. One author says, that the doctrine of necessity is found in its practical operation to be dangerous and irreligious; and another as stoutly and pointedly denies the accusation. Let us, therefore, consider the facts of the case.—Let us throw a glance at the actual history of ancient and modern philosophy, and see what use has really been made of the doctrine of necessary connexion. This will prove more conclusive then merely placing assertion against assertion, opinion against opinion, and statement against statement. If we find that the doctrine in question has been extensively productive of immoral and irreligious principles and notions,—if we see that it has been very generally employed as an instrument for the very worst purposes,—if it can be clearly established by a chain of numerous and incontestible facts, that this doctrine

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has uniformly been moulded into systems of scepticism and doubt, where all religion, whether natural or revealed, becomes ingulfed, and stripped of every salutary and beneficial consequence on the heart and conduct; then I do say, that all arguments for the comparative harmlessness of the doctrine of necessity, drawn merely from a consideration of its abstract nature, ought not to weigh a single feather in the balance when placed against what experience, and the concurrent testimony of ages, maintain to be positively and extensively mischievous.

Pursuing, therefore, the line of argument here suggested, we will lay before the reader a brief and hasty sketch of the opinions of the ancient philosophers on the subject now under consideration. And here I would beg to premise, that I by no means profess to have a very general or accurate knowledge of what those opinions really were on the topic of men's free agency, and on the doctrines of natural religion. From all the sources of information accessible to me, respecting the opinions the ancient sages held on these subjects, I have not been able to gather much that is decidedly satisfactory; for the interpretations given to their language, on nice and abstruse points, are so various

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and conflicting, that it becomes difficult for a general reader to take upon himself to determine decidedly what abstract doctrines of speculation did really form part of the philosophical creed of the inquisitive geniuses of former times. What, however, I shall state on this subject will, I trust, not be far from the truth; but will be confined principally to those leading points on which writers and critics in general are pretty nearly agreed.

The whole system of speculative philosophy among the ancients was of a mechanical complexion. Some of the sects of philosophers incorporated more, and some less, of the principle of necessary connexion with their respective theories, but the difference among them on this point was not great. What must strike every general reader of their works is, the repugnance or aversion they seemed to entertain against the thought, that the phenomena of the universe—the things which were daily made cognizant to them by the senses, and to account for which things was the grand ostensible object of their philosophy,—were the result of the act of the will of a superior Being, the Creator and Upholder of every thing they beheld. Setting out in their inquiries with the principle, that every thing material must have a material cause, and that every

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event and circumstance was indissolubly connected together, they wandered about in the mazes of speculation, guided solely by this glimmering torch of material sensation, till they lost every portion of rationality; and their writings became more like the ravings of madmen, than the sober conclusions of reason and philosophy.

The atomic system, which was taught by Democritus, and by others before his time, constituted the most complete and perfect system of atheism of which we have any authenticated records in ancient literature. This philosophy was grounded on pure materialism; laying it down as a principle, that there was nothing in nature but matter,—that our notions of this matter were simply that it formed a thing impenetrably extended, and possessed no other attributes or powers but those of magnitude, figure, site, rest, and motion; and that there was no self-moving power, save that which arose from the eternal conformation and motion of the minute atoms of which every thing in the universe was supposed to consist. Many modifications of this system prevailed in subsequent ages; but its general features, the prominent outlines of its physiognomy, were, throughout all its changes, strictly preserved. This philosophy is decidedly hostile to

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every principle on which natural and revealed religion are grounded; for the three great leading doctrines of all religion,—the existence of a God, His attributes, and the immortality of the soul, were totally excluded.

The ancient atheists were all averse to believe there was any thing in nature, any active power, except mere matter. This opinion formed their great stumbling block. They were led to acknowledge a degree of sense and understanding in themselves which were not possessed by the other inferior orders of animated nature, or by the clods of the valley; yet these speculative philosophers considered this degree of intelligence as a secondary quality in matter, and was the result of some peculiar material organization, to determine the precise nature of which formed the leading incentive to one half of their philosophical labours. Some learned sects among the sages of antiquity ascribed, indeed, a little more life and activity to their atoms than others did, believing them endowed with something which approached very near to perception; yet this power of perception was always considered to arise from the combination or aggregate influence of the particles of matter, and that there was really nothing existing which had an independent and se-

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parate existence from that material universe which is made manifest to us by our senses.

In reading the philosophical writings of the ancients, we readily perceive that the fundamental distinction between atheists and deists was precisely the degree of intelligence, or active power, which each party incorporated into their system. This distinction is very conspicuous throughout all the different periods or epochs of ancient philosophy. In proportion as men conceived a presiding spirit—an active energy,—who looked over the affairs of men, and who ruled, by virtue of His own power and will, over the destinies of the world; in exact proportion do we find rational and philosophical views entertained of the general principles of natural religion and moral obligation. But, on the contrary, however highly men might admire the great, eternal self-mover of the universe, if a blind chance, or irrevocable necessity, were incorporated with this adoration; their principles and views were every way hostile to all true theism, and they lie justly under the charge of advocating the cause of atheism or fatality.

Leaving the Grecian, we may, in passing, just throw a glance at the Gnostic or Oriental philosophy, which produced so many evils in the Christian

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church during the first three centuries of its establishment. The disciples of this system of the world were divided into several sects or parties, differing in minor matters of detail; but the general principle on which the whole fabric rests, is that of an eternal necessary connexion. The Gnostics represented the divine Being as infinitely happy and perfect, dwelling in profound solitude and blessed tranquillity. But in the process of time two beings were produced, who were also followed with other numerous generations, who constituted a celestial family, and who presided in the regions of eternal night. Beyond the boundaries of this celestial habitation existed, from all eternity, a mass of rude, turbulent, and shapeless matter; and by some kind of chance, or fortuitous impulse, one of the members of this divine family descended for the purpose of modelling this unseemly mass into something like beauty and order; and having created men, and other inferior orders of animated nature, with a rich variety of gifts which tended to the perfect embellishment of the whole, the constitutional malignity of this matter was considerably diminished. The believers in this philosophy always represented the successive generations of celestial beings, from their first great original, under

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the figure or similitude of a vast and eternal *chain;* and this world we inhabit formed the last link of this mighty chain. This notion of eternity differed, in some measure, from that which is common to other systems, because it was made to consist of successive intervals of time, and did not display that stable, closely concatenated, and permanent character, so much insisted on by the platonic philosophers. It was this compound of chance and necessity which rendered this Oriental system so pernicious to the influence of revealed religion; and constituted it one of the most inveterate and destructive philosophical heresies with which the early fathers of the Christian church had to contend.

These remarks, upon the ancient philosophy, might be greatly extended, but this is quite unnecessary, as there can be but one opinion as to its nature and tendency. We will now pass to more modern times, and give a brief review of the sceptical philosophy of our own day.

VANINI, *the Atheist.*—Vanini was a preacher at *Padua*, and was celebrated there for his sermons, which were conspicuous for metaphysical acuteness and occasional bursts of eloquence. He delighted

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in representing to his flock the operations of nature and providence under the similitude of a *vast chain* of causes and effects, linked indissolubly together. He says in his dialogues, that he was preaching one day upon the question, "why God made man," and he completely resolved that puzzling interrogatory by the famous scale of Averroes,* by virtue of which it was necessary there should be a gradation from the lowest to the highest beings. He then proposed the scale, which is in substance as follows. 1*st*, The first matter is the sole *power*, the pure act, viz. God. 2*d*, Next to God are placed the immaterial substances. 3*d*, Next to matter is the form of corporeity. 4*th*, Betwixt these immaterial substances and this form of corporeity, are two animal *souls*, the one *vegetative*, and the other *sensitive*. 5*th*, Above them are the *understanding*; being less than the *intelligences*, for, existing in matter, it is *immaterial* and separable from mat-

* Averroes was an Arabian Philosopher who flourished in the twelfth century. He was Professor in the University of Morocco. The principle of his philosophy, as far as it can be understood, is, that there is a general spirit of intelligence running through all things, but in different graduated proportions; some possessing more, and some less; but that intelligence itself is part of the universe, and not a distinct Being. It is related of him, that he despised not only Judaism and Christianity, but also Mahometanism.

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ter, distinct from it by essence, and confounded with it, as it informs or instructs it. I have no doubt, in my own mind, though the opinion can never be raised beyond the standard of a probable conjecture, that it was the close and exclusive attention to this form of the principle of necessary connexion, which led this miserable and unfortunate creature into his future atheistical reveries; for the promulgation of which he was brought to a cruel and ignominious death at *Toulouse* in the year 1619. After he threw off the mask, and abandoned all religion, he dwelt largely upon the concatenation of events; maintained that all things were the result of chance, but yet were connected together by a stern and inflexible necessity. He adored *nature*, which, in his opinion, meant the sum total of all things.

Spinoza.—That the atheistical principles of Spinoza's are grounded upon necessary connexion in its worst shape, is well known to every reader of topics connected with controversial divinity. *Bayle*, in his *Critical Dictionary*, enters very fully into the peculiar doctrines of *Spinoza;* and he ends his remarks upon the system, by turning Spinoza's principal weapon, *necessity*, against himself. The

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remarks of Bayle are very ingenious, but too long for insertion here.

Passing over the writings of the Earl of Rochester, Mr. Toland, Lord Herbert, and other deistical writers of lesser note, in all of whose writings, however, many pointed applications of the doctrine of necessity will be found; let us come down to the most eminent of the sceptical writers of our own day, and we will find that it is principally with this weapon that they have carried on their warfare. A few of the most popular of these will be noticed.

But I wish to observe here, that it is an erroneous notion to limit the pernicious influence of the doctrine of necessity to the really learned and philosophical among mankind. The class of people among whom this influence rages with peculiar malignity, are the middling class of society, who have a turn for reading and improving their minds, but who are obliged to be content, from their limited opportunities, with a very superficial acquaintance with the principles and rules of true philosophy. It is by books which are adapted to this intermediate class of readers and thinkers, that the greatest portion of mischief is produced, by the application of the system of necessary connexion. Such publi-

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cations as Spinoza's are comparatively harmless; for besides the quaintness and obscurity of their style, the principles such writers wish to unfold, are of such an abstruse nature, that considerable powers of thought, as well as deep and lengthened contemplation, are requisite to obtain only a glimpse of the author's meaning. But in those popular vehicles of infidelity which we are just about to notice, the case is otherwise, for here the principle of necessity is elucidated in such a way, as leads captive the mind of inexperienced youth, or those of riper years, whose minds, or habits of reading, predispose them to take erroneous views of the nature and object of sound philosophy. Where Spinoza's treatise has made one convert, the works of authors just alluded to have made their thousands.

Mr. Hume. This writer is one of the most able and ingenious advocates for the doctrine of philosophical necessity; and the whole fabric of his sceptical system is grounded upon it. The sophisms advanced in his famous *Essay on Miracles*, are merely a particular application of necessary connexion, and derive all their plausibility from the doctrine of absolute fatality. In his *History of Natural Religion*, and in his *Dialogues* on the same

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subject, we find the most decided proofs of the erroneous and mischievous purposes to which the doctrine of necessity may be employed; the arguments and sentiments he puts into the mouth of *Cleanthes* and *Philo*, contain the sum and substance of all that is objectionable in the above doctrine.

VOLTAIRE. There is one small work by this author, which strikingly shows the mischiefs which necessity is calculated to produce on young and inexperienced minds, and which was written for the express purpose of ridiculing Leibnitz's system of pre-established harmony. The publication is a novel, and is entitled "*Candidus, or All for the Best.*" It has been very generally circulated in England, and even throughout the whole of Europe. *Dr. Pangloss* is a philosopher, who maintains that all things are indissolubly connected together; that nothing could have been different from what we find it to be, and that this is the best possible world. *Candidus* is a young, thoughtless, rambling youth, who goes through strange scenes of adventure and profligacy; all of which are represented by the Doctor as pointedly illustrative of the leading principle of his philosophy—that all things are for the best. This is the most seductive form which can possibly

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be given to the doctrine of necessity; for here, profligacy, lewdness, and profaneness are inculcated into the mind of the reader, under the garb, that our passions forms a *necessary* part of the general economy of nature; that nothing could be altered without producing partial or general derangement; and that all men have their parts to fulfil in the constituted order of things; added to which, that in this instance, these doctrines are set off with the elegance, wit and humour, for which Voltaire was so justly celebrated; but it must always prove a subject of universal regret, that he had not employed them in a more virtuous and reputable undertaking, than in debasing and corrupting the minds of the young and thoughtless part of mankind.

MIRABEUAD'S "*Systeme de la Nature.*" This is a purely atheistical book, and scoffs at the idea of every thing in the shape of a Deity, or of mind in general. It has been widely spread over England of late years, and is now found in the hands of most speculative unbelievers. It is called, by way of eminence, the "*Infidel's Bible.*" It pretends to have been written by "Mr. Mirabeaud, aged 80, 40 years member of, and perpetual secretary to, the French academy." This is a sheer piece of imposition, in-

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tended to give some weight to the publication, by representing the author at an advanced age, with death looking him in the face; and, therefore, he would not have promulgated such opinions and sentiments, if he had not been well convinced of their truth and usefulness. The work is generally ascribed to the pen of *Diderot*; its contents are the most erroneous, profane and dismal, that can well be conceived. Nothing but the doctrine of necessity is to seen here, the author having pushed this system to its utmost boundaries. It is unfit even to give the outlines of such a book as this; but an instance of the manner in which error is inculcated, will here be given. The author endeavours to fortify his readers against the fear of death, which he labours to represent as the common lot of all living things; that it is only the effect of a general law of matter and motion; that composition and decomposition is what we every day see around us; that we ought not to grumble or feel alarmed at what is the common lot of all; and that death will prove to us an eternal and peaceful rest. But, probably having his doubts as to the cogency of these earthly arguments, the author takes a flight into the heavens, and pours forth the following lofty appeal to reason—(I quote from

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memory,)—"Dost thou not see in these eccentric comets that appear and astonish thy eyes, that the planets themselves are subject to death? Live then in peace as long as nature permits, and die without terror, if thy mind be enlightened by reason!" What foolish and contemptible writing! and yet how likely to impose on the young and unwary reader.

VOLNEY'S "*Ruins of Empire.*" This is a very popular book among sceptical readers. Look at what the author says in his *Digest of the Laws of Nature*, in his *Invocation*, and in the dialogues he puts into the mouths of the different races of mankind who come to his imaginary tribunal of right reason, to give an account of their systems of religion; and no one can possibly doubt of the pernicious tendency of the doctrine of necessity.

SIR WILLIAM DRUMMOND'S "*Academical Questions.*" This cannot be said to be a popular book; but it is a performance generally known among philosophers. The principles of Sir William's scepticism are well known to be ingrafted upon those of necessity, as upon a parent stock. His arguments and remarks upon motion, and the general

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view he takes of the arrangements of providence, with respect to the existence of moral evil, fully testify that he duly appreciated the value of necessity as a powerful ally in diffusing the tenets of his erroneous philosophy.

The above enumeration, without extending it to a further length, will, it is hoped, be quite sufficient to show the use to which the doctrine of necessity has been put by those writers whose aim was to subvert the leading principles of all natural and revealed religion. When we see how uniformly sceptical writers of every grade have availed themselves of necessity; when we see this philosophical tenet invariably used, from the broad principle of downright fatalism to the more qualified and apparently less obnoxious mode of stating the doctrine, to sap the foundation of all moral responsibility and improvement, we are fully warranted in forming the conclusion, that there must be some *innate aptness* in the doctrine itself to accomplish these purposes, and that its extensive use for these bad ends has not arisen from mere accident or chance.

Indeed it may be stated as a very interesting fact, established beyond all controversy, that the history of sceptical philosophy does not furnish us with a

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single insulated example of one of its writers departing from the doctrine of necessity. It might naturally enough have been expected, that if that doctrine had been so innoxious and harmless, and so little calculated to further the ends of bewildering the understanding and corrupting the heart, as some of its warm and passionate admirers so confidently affirm, that some authors at least would have been found who would have passed heedlessly by, in the course of their speculations, the doctrine of necessity, and would have pursued the path of their investigations without deriving any assistance from it. This is what the natural course of things might lead us to expect; but the fact is quite the reverse. Not one production of the class here alluded to, either of a philosophical or popular cast, is to be found, the foundation and whole superstructure of which does not rest upon some form of the principle of necessity; and a moment's reflection will fully satisfy us that this *must* be the case, from the very nature of things themselves. If a man reject the word of revelation, there is no other logical resource for him, if he reasons at all on the matter, than to take shelter in some of the nooks and corners which the necessarian has so obligingly prepared all around the temple of true wisdom, in order to accommodate those

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whose whims and fancies and waywardness of mind induce them to wander from under its roof. And so literally is this verified, both from history and reflection, that it may confidently be asserted, that no system of scepticism will ever in future be reared, without borrowing liberally of the same materials of which all preceding systems of a similar character are composed, and which materials it is the exclusive province of the philosophical necessarian to furnish.

In concluding these few remarks upon the tendency of the doctrine of necessity, I may be allowed to observe, that there is something, even in the ordinary mode of cultivating natural philosophy, which is apt to lead the mind of the most prudent and wary into irreligious and sceptical modes of thinking. The danger lies entirely in the constant use which is made of cause and effect. When the mind gets familiarised with long chains of intricate reasonings on matter and motion, we begin insensibly, as it were, to lose sight of the great creating and upholding cause of the phenomena we contemplate; and the constant reference we make to secondary causes, and the notions we are thereby likely to imbibe, that we have succeeded in satisfactorily accounting for those appearances in nature, which are beheld by the comparatively uninformed with

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wonder and awe, are of themselves calculated to weaken those natural principles of devotional feeling which are implanted in the hearts of men. We view all the operations of nature under the common similitude of a vast chain, every link of which is firmly and closely linked with one another; but we are too apt to neglect the all-powerful and living link at the supporting end of this chain, and are content with amusing ourselves with the solidity, and beautiful concatenation, of the extended series. I would not by this insinuate, that all natural philosophers are loose and sceptical in their religious opinions; on the contrary, many of the most able and zealous supporters and defenders of natural and revealed religion have been deeply skilled in the principles of natural science. But it shows no disregard to charity, nor is the remark at variance with the truth, that many of the most able expounders of the natural phenomena of the material universe, of the last and present century, have been tinged with irreligious opinions and sentiments; and this, in not a few instances, to such an extent as to induce one to wonder how so much wisdom and so much folly could be united together in the same individual mind. And I think this waywardness of mind is particularly prevalent among the

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cultivators of astronomy. Doubtless this sublime and magnificent branch of human study is admirably calculated to lead our thoughts to recognise the existence of a parent mind, possessed of infinite power and wisdom; and I am fain to believe, that there are very few, if any, atheistical astronomers; but there are a great many who cannot be brought to acknowledge the truths of revelation, but barely content themselves with the belief of the first elementary principle of theology—the being of a God. This is by no means a surprising state of things. The peculiar doctrines of the Gospel seem anomalous and incomprehensible when contrasted with the great and mighty objects which are daily under the contemplation of the astronomer; and the earth appearing in his eye as a mere atom in the mighty system of the universe, he naturally enough asks himself, why it is that such events as the Scriptures relate should have been exclusively confined to this insignificant spot which we inhabit? And so commonly does a notion of this kind take hold of the mind, and so generally is it to be found among the learned, that a very able modern divine, Dr. Chalmers, has thought it his duty to write and publish a volume of sermons, with the view of removing such sceptical objections as may arise from a con-

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templation of the phenomena of the heavens. Indeed, so likely is a train of thought, such as we have now hinted at, to arise in the mind, that we find, in a correspondence between Sir Isaac Newton and Dr. Bentley, that the former was very anxious that his system of the universe might not lead to atheistical conclusions. He observes, that "though gravity might give the planets a motion of descent towards the sun, yet the transverse motions by which they revolve in their several orbits, require the Divine arm to impress them according to the tangents of their orbs."

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CHAPTER XXXIII.

A FEW BRIEF REMARKS UPON SEVERAL MORAL WRITERS OF FOREIGN NATIONS, FROM THE REVIVAL OF LETTERS IN EUROPE DOWN TO THE PRESENT TIME.

In looking over the works of foreign authors on the theoretical principles of morality, since the revival of letters in Europe, the prospect is but dark and dreary. On every topic connected with human nature our continental neighbours have shown a disposition to adopt extravagant theories, and wild and fanciful conjectures. Among several of our English moralists, it is true, this inclination to consult the imagination rather than the judgment, has been partially indulged in; but then the speculations of these writers have always been greatly influenced and tempered by the principles of natural and revealed religion, so generally diffused among the

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great bulk of the nation. And even in those solitary cases where these principles might seem to have been but lightly esteemed in an author's judgment, he has had to shape his course with a reference to their influence on those around him. But on the continent a different state of things has commonly prevailed. Here the mass of the people have been sunk into a state of mental lethargy by the stupifying influence of a degrading superstition; while the learned, on the other hand, cherishing a deep-rooted contempt for the credulity of the multitude, have run into the opposite extreme, and ridiculed and set at nought every sound religious principle. In considering the nature of man, they have looked upon him as a mere insulated being, without any reference to the relations in which he stands to the Great Author of his existence; and hence it is, in the majority of cases, that the continental philosophy of human nature presents to a well-constituted mind such a repulsive aspect, and is so profusely saturated with every thing that is impure, ridiculous, profane, whimsical, and pernicious.

In this general censure on the class of foreign writers here alluded to, there is, however, one important qualification, and that is in reference to the

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authors who have treated of the principles and maxims of civil law and jurisprudence. These deserve our highest admiration and praise. The principal writers on this branch of morality who are generally known in this country, are *Grotius*, *Puffendorf*, *Vattel*, and *Marten*. The celebrated work, *On War and Peace*, written by Grotius, was published in the year 1625. This work treats of the universal law of nations, the law of nature, and the positive law of nations.* Puffendorf published his *Elements of Universal Jurisprudence* in 1660; Vattel, his *Principles of Natural Law*, &c. London, 1723; and Marten, his *Laws of Nations* in 1785.†

It is impossible to give even the most meagre outline of the important doctrines contained in the works enumerated above; but a few observations upon the leading principles involved in all of them, may perhaps be of use to the student and general reader.

* There have been many commentators on Grotius. Among the most celebrated are *Felden, Boecler, Simon, William Grotius*, &c. There are three English editions of the treatise, "*On War and Peace*," one London, 1654, one 1682, both fol. and one 1715, 8vo.

† Marten's Laws of Nations is translated into English by that eminent author, Mr. Cobbett. The last edition is that of 1829, 8vo.

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These works on *jurisprudence* treat of what are commonly denominated the *Laws of Nature* and the *Laws of Nations*. The former must be understood, in this instance, to mean, those ultimate or fundamental principles of *right* and *obligation*, on which the laws of every civil community are assumed to rest. These laws are referred by Grotius and his numerous commentators to two sources, the constitution of our natures as moral, intellectual, and social beings, and to the positive and authoritative declarations of God as contained in his revealed word. Upon these two foundations all human laws, of whatever nature, must depend; that is to say, that no laws can be considered equitable, salutary, and clothed with authority, if they contradict the leading principles of our nature and the law of revelation.

As mankind do not live in one great society, but necessarily become divided and broken into separate sects, commonwealths, and nations, there must arise rules and maxims of conduct for the free intercourse of these distinct communities with one another, and this state of things gives birth to that branch of moral science called the *Laws of Nations*. These laws may be looked upon as containing the sum total of all those moral rights and

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duties which nations or states owe to each other; and these rights and duties bear the same relation to the more comprehensive laws of nature, as the moral obligations and duties of an individual or private kind, to these same laws. The laws of nations relate to the compacts, treaties, leagues, covenants, and agreements formed among different states for their mutual assistance and well-being; but in the construction and execution of these compacts, and so forth, there are no other rules to be guided by but those involved in the laws of nature, which are grounded on the reason and happiness of man and the declarations of the Scripture.

Every reader must be fully aware of the very great importance of the doctrines here treated of; for it is not a question about the happiness of here and there an individual, but the welfare of millions of human beings is immediately connected with the right understanding and application of the principles which are unfolded by writers on jurisprudence; and not only this, but it is utterly impossible for any one clearly to perceive the justice and wisdom of the foreign and domestic policy of any nation, without a familiar and accurate knowledge of the laws of nature and nations. These are the landmarks, the ultimate principles, which must ever

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guide the philosophical lawyer and political economist; for without a knowledge of these, their writings, or speeches, or public actions, no matter how smoothly glossed over by momentary popularity, will infallibly and with unerring certainty exhibit in the end their folly and mischievous consequences.

There have been some modern writers, and writers of distinction too, who have endeavoured to disparage the study of the laws of nature and of nations, by maintaining, that the importance of this study has been greatly overrated. These writers have probably been led to form this low estimate from the frivolous and technical disputes which some of the commentators of Grotius have been engaged in, and from the controversies about the existence and nature of a special social contract. But though these conflicting opinions on verbal niceties, and pure mental abstractions, may be allowed to have taken their rise from the science of jurisprudence, they by no means form a necessary or vital element in this branch of knowledge. They are the fungous excrescences which sprout up from the root of the oak. And, indeed, so necessary and really important does this science appear, in my humble opinion, that I conceive a knowledge of its leading princi-

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ples as essentially required to the statesman, the politician, and the moralist, as a knowledge of the grammatical principles and rules of any particular language is to one who wishes to write or speak that language with correctness and propriety.

SPINOZA.—The leading principle of the philosophy of Spinoza is, that the universe and the Deity are one and the same Being. I do not think it advisable to enter into the matter here at any length. Those who are curious, and desire information on this subject, will find a pretty full account of the doctrines of the author, and of his particular way of treating of them, in the Abbe Condiliac's *Traite des Systemes*, where the poison and the antidote are joined together.

Of Spinoza's ethical opinions I know nothing; but a German author, of apparently very orthodox sentiments, gives the following account of them. "The morality of Spinoza is not indeed that of the Bible, for he was no Christian; but it is still a pure and noble morality, resembling that of the ancient Stoics, perhaps possessing considerable advantages over that system. That which makes him strong when opposed to adversaries who do not understand nor feel his depth, or who unconsciously have

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fallen into errors not much different from his, is not merely the scientific clearness and decision of his intellect, but, in a much higher degree, the open-heartedness, strong feeling, and conviction with which all that he says seems to gush from his heart and soul."*

It is curious to witness the great variety of opinions as to the nature and tendency of Spinoza's system among orators and philosophers. Two books, one by L. Meier, and one by Boulamvillers, were written after his death, in which works it is attempted to be proved that Spinoza's views were quite in unison with the principles of Christianity. And even so lately as the year 1802, a doctor and professor of theology published at Jena an edition of Spinoza's works, in which the editor is by no means sparing of his praise of the author.

Leibnitz. *Godfrey William de Leibnitz* is one of the most eminent philosophers which Germany has produced. His mental speculations go generally under the denomination of *The Pre-established Harmony;* and the leading principles of this theory are the following. The author endeavours to maintain that the soul does not operate on the

* Schlegel's History of Literature. Edin. 1818.

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body, nor the body on the soul; but that each has its separate and independent laws and principles of action; the soul by means of its perceptions and volitions, and the body by means of its material and physical motions. The perceptions and volitions of the mind are followed immediately by corresponding motions of the body; not, however, by any necessary connexions between the two, but from the very nice and delicate mechanism of our bodily structure. The impressions made upon our organs of sensation have no effect upon the mind; but nevertheless the suitable ideas arise in it at the precise moment of time, in consequence of causes of a very different description from those of the bodily impressions.

His moral principles are contained in a Preface to a Treatise on International Law; and in another work entitled, "*Theodocea, or a Dissertation on the Goodness of God, the Liberty of Man, and the Origin of Evil,*" in two volumes. He maintains that moral power is right, and moral obligation is necessity: that a good man is he who loves others as far as reason permits: if we love men, we will be pleased with the happiness of others. Leibnitz's notions seem to have a near affinity to those of Lord Shaftesbury's.

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The author of *The Pre-established Harmony* is a rigid necessarian, and his views as to the wisdom of God and the origin of evil were, that the universe was to be considered as a perfect work, and that nothing could have been altered in it without incurring greater evils.

MALENBRANCHE.—The metaphysical theory of Father Malenbranche is contained in this single principle, that *all things should be seen in God.* His work "*On Morals,*" published at Amsterdam in 1684, contains his moral views. The main ground-work of these is, that we should love and esteem what is good and lovely for its own sake. His notions seem to be nearly the same as Wollaston's and Clarke's.

FATHER BUFFIER.—The work entitled "*A Treatise of First Truths,*" by this learned Jesuit, was written in opposition to the metaphysical systems of Des Cartes, Malenbranche, Hobbes, Locke, and Berkley; and maintains the position, that a principle of *common sense* is the foundation of all human knowledge. Some of the friends and admirers of the author in England have accused Drs. Reid, Oswald, and Beattie, whose philosophical

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works are grounded upon the same principle, with borrowing very liberally from the Frenchman without making the slightest acknowledgment. But the truth of this accusation is denied by the friends of the Scotch writers. Be this as it may, certain it is, that there is a most striking resemblance between the principles of Buffier and those which constitute the essence of the systems advanced by the writers just now alluded to.

The notion which Father Buffier entertains of moral distinctions, in his *First Truths*, is, that whatever contributes to men's happiness is to be denominated *good* and praiseworthy. That all good is to be considered relative to an *end*, and this end is the real and permanent happiness of man. Every thing, even of a subordinate and trivial nature, is considered *good* if it answer the *end* for which it is intended. And it is in this way that we judge of the goodness and wisdom of God, by shewing that, as far as our limited powers permit, we perceive the *means* always adequate to the *end*.

ROCHEFOUCAULT. — *Rochefoucault's* system of morals is founded upon self-love in its very worst form. It has generally been severely criticised in England; and not without reason. According to

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his views, the whole world is nothing but a collection of cannibals or furies, full of envy, pride, malice, revenge, jealousy, distrust, and hatred; and what men denominate virtue, is nothing but a phantom or idle name. The author has moulded his opinions and sentiments into the shape of maxims; and the following are a few of the most objectionable.

"29. The evil we do does not draw upon us so much persecution and hatred as our good qualities.

"39. Interest speaks all sorts of languages, and plays all sorts of characters, even that of disinterestedness.

"62. Sincerity is the openness of the heart, we find it in very few people, and when it is to be found, it is only a species of dissimulation, the better to entrap the confidence of others.

"69. If there be any such thing as pure love, it is concealed at the bottom of our hearts, even from ourselves.

"78. The love of justice is in most men only a desire to avoid injustice towards themselves.

"93. Old men love to give good advice, only because they can no longer give bad examples.

"242. We easily console ourselves for the disgraces of our friends, when they give us an opportunity to shew our kindness for them.

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"312. Interest, which is accused of all our crimes, deserves generally the praise of our virtues.

"254. We seldom call those men of sense who are not of our opinion."

There is, however, no system of ethics without some portion of truth in it; and it must be confessed, that *Rochefoucault* has furnished ample proof that he was an acute examiner of human nature. The truth of many of his maxims is fully substantiated by every man's daily observation; yet the general tenor of the Duke's philosophy is of a very objectionable kind.

HELVETIUS.—This author is known to English readers, principally from his two works, "*On the Mind*," and "*On Man*." The latter is a posthumous publication. The mental theory maintained in these two treatises is, that all our ideas are derived from the senses; that all men's minds possess originally an equal aptitude for knowledge; and that the difference which we really do find to exist between one mind and another, arises from the difference in education; meaning by this term, not only domestic treatment, but that kind of education we obtain from the different situations in life in which we are placed. In our author's opinion, all the

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operations of the mind may be resolved into this general one—that of observing the resemblances and differences between objects, and their fitness and unfitness with regard to ourselves. A judgment formed after a comparison of material objects, is a pure sensation; and every conclusion of the understanding, with regard to abstract ideas, may be considered as precisely the same.

According to *Helvetius*, all our virtues are derived from self-love; and this power is grounded upon our physical sensibility—*self-love* is the desire of power, and this produces envy, avarice, ambition, the love of glory, of justice, virtue, and of every passion, good as well as bad. The author affirms that religion has little or no effect over the conduct of men; but the best kind of religion would be that which could bring the science of legislation to the highest state of perfection.

The desire men have to live in a state of society, is the result of their bodily wants. "Interest and want are the principles of all sociability. It is, therefore, those principles alone (of which few writers have given clear ideas) that unite men among themselves; and the force of their union is always in proportion to that of habit and want. From the moment the young savage, or the young bear, is able

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to provide for his nourishment and his defence, the one quits the hut and the other the den of his parents. The eagle, in like manner, drives away her young ones from the nest, the moment they have sufficient strength to dart upon their prey, and live without her aid."*

KANT.—I must confess myself completely ignorant of the "*Critical or Transcendental Philosophy*" of Emanuel Kant. I have made several attempts to get a glimpse of his system, but have been obliged to give up the undertaking in despair. Talk of scholastic jargon and barbarism! Why, if it were possible to extract all the verbal jargon of the schools, from the Christian era down to the fifteenth century, into one book, it would come far short of the obscurity of the *Critical Philosophy*. No English reader can form the most distant conception of Kant's writings without he saw them. But let the reader suppose that every sentence of this book were cut separately out of it, all put into a bag, and well shaken, and then promiscuously taken out one by one, and placed in the form of a book again; he might then have some faint idea of the *transcendental* effusions of this German writer.

* On Man, vol. i. p. 137.

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CHAPTER XXXIV.

GENERAL REMARKS UPON THE PRECEDING CHAPTERS, WITH OBSERVATIONS ON THE MORAL THEORY WHICH SEEMS TO SQUARE BEST WITH A DIVINE REVELATION.

From the phrase, "*a History of moral science*," the reader may be apt to conceive a perfect resemblance between the objects of moral inquiries and those subjects which go generally under the denomination of experimental philosophy. This somewhat natural association is likely to produce a certain degree of confusion in the reader's mind, by inducing him to suppose that there was once a time, in the history of mankind, when all morality was as totally unknown as the principles of galvanism or of gravitation were to former ages. The word *history*, when commonly applied to any art or science, is used to denote the various eras or periods of time when such and such facts or princi-

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ples in that art or science were first discovered or unfolded, and by this means to give a progressive account of improvements, from the point we commence our historical details, down to a certain definite period of time. In this manner, we have histories of mathematics, astronomy, mechanics, and electricity; but a history of moral science is to be considered in a somewhat different light. Here we are to bear in mind, that a certain degree of moral knowledge must have been, at all periods of the history of the human race, known to them; for some of the primary principles of moral obligation and duty are inseparably connected with the rudest and most simple forms of human society. Men living even in single families, or detached tribes, must recognise certain principles of right and wrong; and in no large community of human beings was it ever known, or can it be conceived, that they could be bound together for the purposes of either social intercourse or aggregate defence, without a practical knowledge of some of the leading duties of moral obligation.

A history, therefore, of moral science, must, from the very nature of things, be a history which partakes more of arrangement than of substance, which treats more of the relative degree in which

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moral information is diffused among mankind at different periods, than of the precise *epochas* when certain moral truths were first discovered and openly recognised. Men may have been more ignorant and more regardless of their moral duties and obligations at one time than at another; and different countries always have exhibited, and do at this day exhibit, a considerable difference as to the degree in which moral illumination exists among them. They may have speculated upon, arranged, and systematized the motives and rules of moral conduct, agreeably to various abstract principles, and to square in with very opposite religious or philosophical systems; but it behoves us to recollect, that while these matters form the elements of moral science, we are not to imagine that we are unfolding at every step of our progress new maxims of morality, or new motives to obedience. The general principles of human nature are the same in all ages and countries; and these must always constitute the frame-work of every ethical system. The materials lie before us, which we can neither add to nor diminish. We may arrange, classify, analyze, embellish or generalize them; but if a philosopher thinks he can be able, by intense or well-directed study, to discover a hidden moral prin-

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ciple, he will certainly find himself most egregiously mistaken.

As illustrative of these few remarks, we may observe, that what must strike every reader, in looking over the account we have given of the principal moral systems, is, the little difference we perceive among them as to their leading principles. There is a considerable diversity perceptible in regard to different modes of illustration, and to the moral and religious inferences which each author is anxious to draw from his premises; but if we look closely to these premises themselves, we will find the differences among them all to be fairly resolvable into a still smaller number of elementary principles. All the systems we have examined may, I conceive, be referred to six distinct heads. 1st, The eternal and immutable nature of all moral distinctions. 2d, That utility, public or private, is the foundation of moral obligation. 3d, That all morality is founded upon the will of God. 4th, That a moral sense, feeling, or emotion, is the ground of virtue. 5th, That it is by supposing ourselves in the situation of others, or by a species of sympathetic mechanism, that we derive our notions of good and evil. And, 6th, The doctrine of vibrations, and the association of ideas.

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Those whose doctrine is mainly founded upon the first principle,—that of the eternal and immutable nature of all moral distinctions,—are Dr. Cudworth and Mr. John Locke; Bishop Cumberland, who adopts, however, this principle with more qualifications than several others; Mr. Wollaston, by his fitness of things; and Dr. Clarke, by his truth of things; Dr. Price, Mr. Gisborne, and Dr. Dewar.

Those writers who ground their theories upon the doctrine of utility, or, as it is sometimes termed, the selfish system, are rather numerous. Mr. Hobbes is the first on the list. Mr. Stewart remarks, that there is in point of principle a far more close and intimate connexion between the opinions of this writer and Mr. Hume, and others of this school, than what has commonly been imagined; and this remark is perfectly correct. Mr. Hume himself is at the head of this philosophical party. Mandeville's Fable of the Bees, is, though in a caricaturist's dress, bottomed on the same views of human nature. Pope and Bolingbroke take the universal weal as the standard of morals. Mr. Rutherford considers the advantages which the Scriptures hold out to those who practise virtue, as the ultimate end of it. Paley's system is well known as grounded on the general good. Godwin's Political

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Justice, and Mr. Bentham's system, are founded upon the same principle.

Archbishop King stands alone in maintaining that the will of God is the sole foundation of virtue; if we except Dr. Paley, who has coupled this principle with the system of expediency.

Those who are advocates for a *Moral Sense*, are Shaftesbury, Bishop Butler, Dr. Hutcheson, Lord Kames, Professor Stewart, and Dr. Thomas Brown. Dr. Cogan's views seem grounded on the same views.

Dr. Adam Smith's work on Moral Sentiments, is the only one which is grounded solely on the principle of sympathy.

Dr. Priestley and Dr. Hartley are the only two writers who maintain that the Association of Ideas is the ground of good and evil.

There are none of these different systems that are not in some degree founded on truth; but the great imperfection which runs through them all is, that they attempt to generalise too much. We cannot resolve all the moral feelings and habits of our nature into one general principle.

I readily confess, however, that, *as a mere theory*, I am inclined to approve of Archbishop King's in preference to any other. The abstract arguments,

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for and against this theory have been detailed at a considerable length, in the essay on King's system; but I will here advance a few additional reasons, principally of a more popular complexion, in favour of the doctrine, that virtue depends upon the will of God.

I think it a very important rule in all our inquiries into really interesting matters of speculation, and a rule, too, which we ought never to lose sight of for a single moment, that where the more abstract arguments of any two opposite theories are pretty nearly balanced, and where it becomes a very nice or difficult matter to come to a decided conclusion as to which we should give the preference, that we ponder well which system is likely to square in with the general or popular notions current among mankind on the subject, and how their moral and religious opinions may be affected by the views we adopt. Two opposite theories of human nature may be supported by nearly the same degree of abstract evidence; but the one may exercise a pernicious, or at least a cold and chilling, effect upon our moral affections and religious feelings; and the other may strengthen and invigorate both, in a very decided and powerful degree. To which, then, ought we to give the preference? Undoubtedly to

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the latter. Now there are many such questions relating to human nature, of which much may be advanced on both sides; and the man who is inclined to doubt their existence, knows but little of his own mind, or of philosophy in general. I would therefore wish to try the validity of the moral theories, namely, the eternal nature of all moral distinctions, and that morality depends upon the will of God, by the standard here alluded to.

I find great use has been made of the doctrine promulgated by Dr. Cudworth and others, in every system of infidelity which has appeared within these last two hundred years. I find an assumed principle running through every such system, that all moral distinctions are to be considered like mathematical truths, or facts in natural philosophy, of a fixed and eternal nature. These moral distinctions are made known to us by our moral faculties of perception, in a manner analogous to the way in which we perceive the other elements of knowledge; and these moral distinctions become clothed with moral obligation *solely* from their being perceived by us; and, *therefore*, (mark the inference, reader,) *no particular revelation from heaven was necessary to point out man's moral duty.* Our moral obligations are as clearly and forcibly pointed

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out to him, say all such writers, by *the light of nature*, by *the laws of nature*, by *the suggestions of nature*, by *the constitution of nature*, and so on; and therefore morality is as firmly secured upon *our systems*, as upon any theological basis on which you can place it. These kinds of assertions, and this kind of reasoning, (if it can be called reasoning,) constitute one-half of all the treatises against natural and revealed religion, which have hitherto appeared in the world. And it may safely be predicted, that every new system of scepticism will follow in the same train, for this obvious reason, that there is no other resource left to the speculative unbeliever but this. He cannot deny the importance of virtue; he must, however reluctantly, pass a complimentary eulogy upon her; but at the same time he is compelled to maintain that her charms and graces are seen to most advantage, and her influence felt most powerfully, when viewed through the medium of those simple faculties with which nature has furnished all her children. Can any thing be more fallacious than this doctrine? Yet it derives all its plausibility, all its strength of argument, and all its pernicious influence over the minds of those by whom it is studied and adopted, to this particular doctrine of morality, against

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which these remarks are directed. Without the eternal and immutable nature of morality, the sceptical doctrines usually propagated in this and other countries could have little or nothing to rest upon.

Considering man's situation in this world relative to his Maker, what a poor, blind creature he is, and at what an immeasurable distance he is placed from creative power and wisdom: there appears a peculiar fitness and propriety in all moral obligation being centered in the Divine will. And as the important truths of morality and religion are adapted to the condition of all men, in whatever station of life they may be; and as the great mass of mankind never can have time nor talents to enter into long and refined speculations relative to the abstract nature or foundation of their duty; another powerful reason obviously presents itself for maintaining the doctrine, that rules of morality owe their value, and obligatory character, to the all-wise and powerful Being who has commanded them. I feel confident, that if we could enter into the precise views which the great bulk of mankind, who have any sound opinions on moral and religious subjects, entertain in their common and every-day train of thought, we would find that the sacredness and awe that are hedged round their virtuous and

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pious obligations, rest upon the most perfect implicit obedience to the ordinances and commands of God. And this will, and ever must be, the state or frame of mind of the world at large, if correct moral and religious truths be imparted to them.

It has already been hinted that the peculiar doctrines of the Scriptures must become objects of faith, and motives to moral and religious obedience, solely from the will of God. The doctrine of the eternal fitness of all moral truths squares in with the divine record to a considerable extent; but there is a point at which it fails to be of any use, and we are compelled to acquiesce in implicit obedience. And the same remark is applicable to those doctrines of Scripture which are countenanced by many analogical appearances in the government of the world around us. For example, the great doctrine of the atonement may be supported by arguments drawn from the universality of sacrifice among almost every people of whom we have any account; but it is equally clear, that however strong such arguments may be, they are but *auxiliary arguments* after all. They only help to confirm what the positive declarations of the Bible say we are to believe. No arguments drawn from such analogical sources could ever possibly bring the mind to the be-

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lief that the great atonement for our sins was made in the precise way and manner we find it to have been. This is a subject for our faith, and the most confiding and implicit faith too. And the same may be said of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. However liberally we may draw our arguments from the appearances of nature and the power of God, and however admirably arranged they may be, so as to give to every one its full effect; such arguments could never suggest to us the Scripture foundation for our belief in this important doctrine. No, we must here make our stand upon the simple declarations of the word of God. Indeed, so totally inadequate is the hypothesis of the eternal nature and fitness of moral distinctions to account for all the doctrines of revelation, that it cannot by any logical process account for a single one of them. We may take this hypothesis with us a certain length in our Christian journey, but we will have to leave it, and proceed on our way without it.

I should like to know what is meant by the *word of God?* Are we merely to understand by these important and emphatic words, that this revelation was sent solely to confirm the moral hypothesis of *sympathy*, or *moral sense*, or *moral emotion*, or

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fitness, or *utility*, or *benevolence?* Are we to maintain there is no moral obligation or duty legitimately deducible from the command of God? Is there nothing implied in a revelation of His will but a bare confirmation of those moral duties which the light of nature or reason points out we should perform? Was this the end or purpose for which the Bible was sent from heaven, and which the peculiar doctrines therein taught were intended to effect? If this be the case, then I would say that the Scriptures are a complete failure; for I venture to affirm, that from Genesis to Revelation, inclusive, there is not a single passage, which, when fairly examined, claims the attention and homage of mankind upon any other ground than what is implied in the command which accompanies it. There is not even the shadow of an argument in favour of the opinion, that the Scriptures were sent for the purpose of strengthening or illustrating any of the theories just named. And if this be the case, how inconsistent in any writer to hold up any of the theoretic systems alluded to with the one hand, while, with the other, he is at the same moment pointing to the superior obligations of inspired wisdom. I may admire the subtilty, or the wit, or the eloquence of such an author, but I can ne-

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ver admit his logical consistency. To one who does not concede the authenticity of the scriptures, the case is altogether different. He may be allowed to frame such theories, from the materials which the light of nature may furnish him with, as his fancy or whim may dictate. But towards the philosopher who sincerely and conscientiously takes the word of God for his moral creed and guide in the journey through life, and yet at the same time declares, that no part of that inspired word is clothed with moral obligation by virtue of the command of Him who issued it forth; I can find no words strong enough to convey my sentiments of astonishment and wonder at the inconsistency manifested in his opinions.

But for the sake of the argument let us acquiesce in the doctrine, to its fullest extent, that the scriptures are only intended as a fuller confirmation of the moral obligation of those duties which the law of reason or nature imposes on us; what is gained by the opponents of those who maintain that the will of God is the foundation of moral obedience? Why, only this, that *a part* of this superior moral obligation is admitted to be derived from the mere command of God; and is there not as much difficulty in admitting this additional part to the force

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of natural reason, as if the whole of moral obligation were attributed to the same source? Let it be once conceded that natural morality receives additional confirmation from the revealed record of truth, and there is not a philosophical resting-place for the sole of the foot for those who adopt any other theory but the simple will of God.

If we look into the Scriptures themselves, we will clearly perceive that the command or will of God is the only legitimate doctrine on which the morality and the peculiar tenets of revelation are made to rest. This will fully appear if we will attend to those events and circumstances which display what is meant by *pure faith* in the divine commands. As this subject is important and interesting, we will here devote a page or two to its consideration.

Faith, according to common sense and the declarations of Scripture, is the believing in any thing or command, the propriety or reasonableness of which is not made manifest to us by the exercise of the judgment or understanding. Were we to say that a man has faith in the proposition that the square of the hypothenuse is equal to the square of the other two sides, or that two and two make four, we would not only be departing from the

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usual acceptation of language, but justly lay ourselves open to the charge of talking foolishly. To have faith in any thing, or in any command, is not to see the truth of that thing, or the propriety or fitness of that command, by a chain of arguments, or by the innate suitableness of the things or matters in which we are called upon to repose our full and perfect confidence. On the contrary, the farther any thing is removed from our observation or reason, and the more difficult it becomes for us to assign any reason or cause for its existence or mode of operation, in precisely the same degree does our faith become the greater and more perfect. The astronomer knows the general laws which regulate the movements of the heavenly bodies; the experimental philosopher is familiarly acquainted with the principles which regulate the motion of fluid bodies; and the mechanist makes himself daily conversant with the principles of mechanical motion. But to none of these different classes of men do we ascribe *faith* in their respective objects of pursuit; and for this obvious reason, that all the elements of their knowledge are within the sphere of demonstration or experiment, and become cognizable by the exercise of those ordinary powers and faculties, with which, as sentient

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beings, we are endowed. The term *faith* has been generally limited to theology in all its parts; because it is here that subjects are treated of which are not matters of strict demonstration, but become objects of inquiry and interest to us, from very different causes than those which make the ordinary subjects of human learning interesting. The apostle Paul gives the most comprehensive and the most correct definition of the nature of faith, in the 11th chapter of the Hebrews. He says, "that faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen." That is, the truth of many things is made manifest to us, not from the evidence of our external senses, or by the eyes of the understanding, so to speak, but solely from the fact, that they have been revealed from heaven, and commanded to form part of our belief, and to influence our conduct by virtue of that belief.

I am fully aware, that when the term *faith* is used in Scripture, in reference to the goodness of God in our behalf, in giving us the Gospel, and to the system of means which he has commanded us to use, and which are admirably fitted to our varied condition, it may, with strict propriety, be termed the *gift of God.* But it must be noticed, that when the word *faith* is used as descriptive of that dispo-

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sition of mind which is necessary for a proper investigation into the truth of the gospel, towards a firm belief in those truths, and for the right employment of those means appointed for producing that belief; *faith* is invariably in scripture referred to the *man himself*, and is considered as an *active* and *living* principle. We are not only called upon to give our implicit assent to the declaration of revealed truth, but that assent must produce *action* also, otherwise it is a dead principle, and of none effect. It is on this account that we are so earnestly commanded to believe in the existence, attributes, and decrees of the Almighty, and the possession of this belief is looked upon as virtuous and praiseworthy, and the want of it laid to man's charge as a great and weighty sin.

In conformity with the substance of these few general observations, let us examine a little more minutely the nature of a few of those actions which are pointed out to us in the Scriptures, as remarkable instances of an ardent and virtuous faith, and which are stated for our especial guidance and instruction.

The conduct of Noah in building the ark furnishes a striking instance of faith in the simple declarations of God. He did not require of the Al-

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mighty to give him a *reason* for the impending catastrophe which had just been threatened; he did not puzzle himself to find out the *eternal fitness* or *reasonableness* of the command; but the order to provide himself and his whole household with an ark, came clothed with all the force of the most powerful moral obligation. There was nothing in the regular course of nature which could, by possibility, induce him to believe in the threatened judgment; nothing which could animate and support him in his work of self-preservation, save the simple command which had been delivered to him. On the contrary, we may well imagine, that if he had begun to speculate on the laws of nature, and allowed the experience of his long life to regulate his judgment and conduct as to the future, he would have found arguments, many and powerful, for carelessly neglecting the solemn injunctions and warnings of the Almighty. And we may readily suppose, that while he was daily making the necessary preparations for his safety; while the command which had been delivered to him constantly filled him with the most ardent zeal for the final accomplishment of his undertaking; there would not be wanting those who would ridicule his conduct, and would do all that lay in their power by argument

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to dissuade him from his purpose. They would, in all probability, remind him of the stability of nature; how every thing, from the most antiquated records of time, had gone on just as they at that time saw them. The rising and setting of the sun, the changes of the moon, the regular appearances of the stars, the return of the seasons, summer and winter, seed-time and harvest; and in fact every known and obvious operation of nature would be pointed out to give strength to their own wisdom, to remove the unnecessary fears of Noah, and to show the uselessness of his project. The multitude would deride, and the philosophers of that day would reason, till the lightnings began to quiver, the thunders to roll, and the waters to descend; then the horror and dismay which we may well suppose would seize their minds, would just allow them time to throw a momentary glance at the total insufficiency of mere human reason, when opposed to the simple commands and authoritative declarations of Heaven.

In Abraham's offering up his son Isaac upon the altar, we find another remarkable instance of faith; and it shows us in a clear and singularly forcible manner, how a command or order becomes invested with a moral power and sacredness, from the

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mere circumstance of its being commanded. Abraham's situation, as to his paying implicit obedience to the commands of God, was somewhat different from that of Noah's. The latter was fully informed of the earth's inundation, and of the terrible effects and calamities which would befal all those who had no place of refuge to fly to; and it is but reasonable to suppose, that self-interest would have a considerable influence in prompting him to pay more attention to the divine injunction, than he might otherwise have done, had that injunction not been coupled with a promise of a gracious and merciful deliverance to himself and his family. But in Abraham's case the matter assumes a different aspect. Here the command was not coupled with any good to be obtained, nor any evil to be averted. It was a simple and naked command, issued forth for no visible end or purpose. The language of Scripture is strikingly authoritative on this occasion. In the 22d chapter of Genesis we find that God commanded Abraham, saying, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." The ready and implicit obedience which this order called forth on the part of

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Abraham is not less pointedly shown in the following words,—"And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and clave the wood for the burnt-offering, and rose up, and went into the place of which God had told him. Then, on the third day, Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together. And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father; and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering; so they went both of them together. And they came to the place which God told them of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order; and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son."

It will not, I think, be pretended that this divine

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order was clothed with any thing like moral fitness or propriety; nay, the very contrary was the case; for we may truly say, that the command in itself, or abstractly considered, was improper, and morally unfit, in the very highest degree. And it is on this account, and this alone, that Abraham is placed in so imposing an attitude, and commands so large a portion of our admiration and esteem. This remarkable devotedness to the will of God has attained for him the appropriate appellation of "*the Father of the faithful.*"

Many similar instances to those mentioned, though less striking, might be brought forward from the Scriptures, all tending to exemplify that spirit and frame of mind with which we should receive the intimations of events and commands, which may be sent to us from above. But we will here just mention another which occurs in the beginning of the first chapter of St. Luke's Gospel. This lesson relates to the birth of John the Baptist. The angel Gabriel intimates to Zacharias, that his wife should conceive and bear a son, who should be a great and holy man, and the forerunner of one still more holy and mighty than himself. But the old man wanted to know *how* these things could be, seeing that he could not exactly perceive the

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reason for them, and also that their accomplishment seemed, in his eyes, to be in opposition to the established order of nature. And what more natural than his question to the angel? and how modestly and humbly was that question put? yet how severe the rebuke! "And behold thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season."

The authoritative manner in which the tables of the law were promulgated from Mount Sinai, is quite in unison with the doctrine taught in Scripture, as to the implicit obedience we should yield to the rules and commands found therein. All the external circumstances mentioned in Exodus, relative to this important event, were calculated to excite, in the minds of the Jews, the most profound awe and reverence; and to repress in their minds every feeling or suggestion of speculative curiosity, as to the reasons, or suitableness, or fitness, of the law so given to them. The people and the priests were commanded to stand at the outskirts of the mountain, on pain of instant death; Moses and Aaron being alone chosen as the channels of communication between the Deity and people, and the

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instruments of conveying this divine code of laws to mankind. This legislative announcement was accompanied with thunder and lightning; the smoking of the mountain; the shaking of the earthquake; the shrill voice of the trumpet; and, in fact, with every circumstance which the imagination of man can conceive, calculated to give an idea of the most perfect authority and power of the lawgiver, and of that implicit obedience and humble submission which were required of all those for whom this law was promulgated.

Thus we have endeavoured to prove that the plain declarations of Scripture teach us, that we are to look upon the commands found in the Bible, as clothed with moral obligation, from the mere circumstance of their being commanded. And supposing that there may be some speculative difficulties in demonstrating how an order or command can be morally binding, from the mere authority which imposes it; is not every theory of morals, which the wit of man has yet invented, encircled with similar difficulties? Do we see *how* moral obligation arises from the *eternal fitnesses of things*, or from *sympathy*, or from *benevolence*, or from *self-love*, or from a *moral sense*, or from *moral emotion*, or from *association*? or, indeed, from any other principle

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which has been made the ground-work of a system, save the pure will of God? Let a person ponder upon these questions; let him turn them over in his mind, and view them in every possible light; he will see that there is no more difficulty involved in the theory, that the communicated will of an infinitely superior Being must be a rule of conduct to an inferior creature, than there is to be found in any theory of moral action that philosophy can produce. And even granting, for the sake of the argument, that the objections drawn from reason against the doctrine, that all moral obligation is ultimately resolvable into the will of God, be as numerous and formidable as against any other system of speculative morality; is there not a great preponderating influence given to the former theory, from its squaring in so completely with the general scope and tendency of that book, which we maintain contains that very revealed will of our Creator to us his children? Is this consideration not sufficient of itself to shew us where the superior degree of evidence lies, and to what conclusions we should come to respecting those principles on which we ought to rest our speculative opinions of moral action?

But I think I hear some of my readers urging, by way of objection to these remarks, that though

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they were to acquiesce in the doctrine that the moral rules found in the Scriptures owed their obligatory character to the Divine command which accompanies them; yet this concession would not go to prove that those principles of moral obligation which are grounded on our nature, and form part of our very organization, independent of any direct revelation from heaven, ought to be referred also to the will of God. But to this it may be observed, that the *laws of nature*, as the natural principles of morality are commonly called, cannot be referred to any other source than to the will of the Almighty. It was from His power that they have all derived their existence; and no reason can be assigned for their existence, than that it has so pleased Him to make them as we find them. We may, and it is quite agreeable to His *revealed word* that we should, assume, that the glorification of His own attributes, and the ultimate happiness of His creatures, are the grand final ends of the moral arrangements of the world; but, at the same time, we would do well to remember, that the nature and degrees of this final glorification and happiness, can never be understood by us in our present condition; and, therefore, we cannot make our very limited knowledge on these subjects a foundation for all virtuous action and religious obedience.

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CHAPTER XXXV.

A BRIEF NOTICE OF THE MORALITY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

In this concluding chapter, it may prove of advantage to take a brief glance of the leading features of Scriptural morality. It is not to be expected that any thing new or original can be advanced on this subject; as it has exercised the talents and ingenuity of many eminent individuals, for numerous generations which have passed away. Without entering into any discussion on the peculiar doctrines of the Scriptures, to illustrate and explain which doctrines belong to the province of the divine; we will here hazard a few general remarks, which may not, perhaps, be considered an altogether unseasonable close to the contents of these volumes.

We are to look upon the Scriptures as the most ancient moral writings we possess; and, on this ac-

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count, they are justly entitled to our attentive consideration. Whatever claims other writings of a profane kind have advanced for a corresponding or even a greater antiquity, they are in all cases grounded upon such fictions and improbable statements, that we run no risk of injuring the cause of truth by discarding them altogether. There are undoubtedly differences in opinion among Christian authors, as to the precise period of time when the Scriptures were written, as well as when the principal events therein related actually took place. These conflicting opinions, however, arise chiefly from the different copies of the Scriptures, which have been taken as the foundation for various chronological systems. These copies are three in number,—the common Hebrew Scriptures, the Samaritan, and the Septuagint or Greek version of them. The chronological discordances found among many writers, originate from the different statements of the Patriarchal genealogies which are given in these respective copies of the inspired books. But the reader would do well to bear in mind that the differences in statement, as to the age of the world, and time when the principal events in it took place, do not, according to the most respectable writers in chronology, extend beyond a few centu-

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ries at most; and, therefore, no sceptical conclusions are fairly deducible from these contrary opinions; nor ought we to set the less value on the moral doctrines contained in these sacred books, merely because a few writers, who have laudably devoted much time and research to the subject, are not able to agree as to the fractional portion of time when these valuable writings were composed, or the leading events they record took place.

In perusing the Scriptures, we readily perceive a great difference between them, and other moral works which have come under our notice, in the total absence of all speculative theories and refined disquisitions. The only principle into which the declarations, maxims, and counsels, contained in the Bible are resolved, is the power or the will of God. This is the only thing like a philosophical theory which is incorporated with every portion of the book, and to which we are called upon to give an implicit assent. But it is this theory which gives to the Scriptures their great and manifest superiority over every other book on moral subjects. Instead of demonstrating the truth of moral maxims and principles, and enforcing their obligation by the intricate and circuitous route of profound speculations and long chains of reasonings, we have here the voice of God

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himself; of that Being whose existence, power, and goodness, are pointed out to us by every surrounding object, and by every feeling and impulse of the human heart. Here a powerful and overwhelming interest is imparted to every moral duty; which no system of human ethics can possibly possess. It is the knowledge of the existence and attributes of the Deity which must ever give to the morality of the Scriptures the highest possible degree of interest to human beings, and must be at all times a most formidable check upon the conduct of those who pay attention to their contents, with a view of making them the rule and guide of their life.

The morality of the Bible is vastly comprehensive, yet expressed with singular conciseness, easily understood, and of a very authoritative character. The language is at once the most simple and most beautiful which the best cultivated intellectual nature can conceive. Its composition is like nothing but itself. The Scripture writings possess a peculiarity of style, which the ordinary language of literary criticism is totally inadequate to express. We here search in vain for words to express our ideas. Every attempt at description must be imperfect; and all imitations must come infinitely short of the excellencies of the original. Let the brightest genius the

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world ever saw try his pen at an imitation of these works, in the mere matter of writing, (setting aside the valuable knowledge they contain,) and his efforts will bear in the comparison about the same relation to the original, that a wretched sign-post does to a highly-finished painting by a first-rate master.

What an inexhaustible source of pleasure do the Scriptures present to those who are ardent admirers of poetic beauty and sublimity in thought and language. Here, no other works, however eminent, have any claims to be placed in competition with them. The Hebrew poetry is justly entitled to the epithet of *inspiration*; a term which the depraved taste, and the gross ignorance of the world at large, have too often applied to the bacchanalian reveries, the impure suggestions, the wild rhapsodies, and the worse than childish puerilities which have emanated from the ill-regulated imaginations of drunkards and profligates. To give specimens from the Scriptures, would be to transcribe three-fourths of their contents; but I would merely ask the lover of profane descriptive poetry, where he will find, either among ancient or modern writers, so many noble images as are collected together in only one psalm, the hundred and fourth? I venture to affirm that he could not present us, from as many volumes as

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there are verses in this psalm, such a constellation of poetic beauties as is here exhibited in this short piece of scriptural writing. This opinion may, perhaps, excite the scornful smile of the poetic witling of the alehouse or the tavern; but the man of good feeling, and of genuine taste for the sublime, will cheerfully acquiesce in its truth. These remarks are put forth without the most distant view of throwing the slightest discredit on the perusal of real poetry of any age or country; but only to impress upon the reader's attention, that while he may be laudably cultivating an acquaintance with a noble art, he will find it of advantage not altogether to overlook that book, which contains such a rich store of that kind of poetry, which at once delights the mind and improves the heart.

We are to consider the scriptures as the only sure foundation for equitable laws among mankind. The civil benefits we daily derive from them are of incalculable value. Though no particular form of government is recommended in the Bible, we are to recollect that the *seeds* or *germs* of every rational system of civil liberty and authority, are to be found there, *and nowhere else.* The principles of justice—the political obligations between the governors and the governed, are laid down with a clearness,

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a minuteness, and sacredness, which must ever impress those who make themselves acquainted with them, with a deep conviction of their paramount worth and importance. The generality of writers, as well as the world at large, are too apt to take a limited and partial view of the scriptures, by considering them exclusively intended for theological purposes, and that they have only an incidental or indirect application to our civil duties and privileges. But this is an error which a bare perusal of the sacred volume would be sufficient to correct. Man's political welfare is as sedulously and carefully watched over as his social and religious; and the former is as frequently dwelt upon, both in the way of precept and example, as the latter.

It would lead to a very interesting, though in this place by far too extended an inquiry, to point out the degree of influence which the moral principles of the Scriptures has exercised since their general promulgation over the civil liberties of mankind. There is a notion prevailing in the minds of the great mass of mankind, that liberty is a plant that grows up spontaneously out of the natural resources of our social nature, and its successful cultivation may be carried on without any direct or indirect assistance from the Bible. But how slender

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are the grounds for such an opinion as this! The whole history of political philosophy is in opposition to it. What was the condition of man as a social being before the general dissemination of the Scriptures? What notions of liberty, of just and equal laws, and of willing and cheerful obedience to them, prevailed in the minds of mankind anterior to their knowledge of scriptural morality? Shall we look to ancient Greece and Rome, the seats of philosophy and literature, for sound and humane principles of legislation? Alas! what political ignorance, barbarism, and misrule lurked under the imperial purple, the decrees of the Amphictyonic counsel, and the republican codes of Sparta and of Athens! If an important legislative maxim found its way, either by accident or by dint of well-directed genius, into the minds of the ancient lawgivers, they scarcely knew its use or application. It was either pushed beyond its legitimate boundaries, or fell powerless from their hands for want of sufficient authority. Thus it is, that the best organized governments of ancient times, under whatever name they might be denominated, present to us nothing but an unwieldy mass of human beings; kept together, not by virtue of any thing worthy of the name of political wisdom and justice,

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but merely by the force of those strong and instinctive feelings of human nature, which we in common possess with many of the inferior orders of creation.

When men have been long accustomed to experience the benefits and pleasures of any thing, they are naturally but too apt to withdraw their minds from the contemplation of the sources from which they spring, or the hand which bestows them. Precisely so is it with men in regard to the value and importance of the Scriptures. Could we take a comprehensive view of both the direct and indirect influence which have been derived from the Bible, in the framing of the laws and institutions of every civilized country in Europe; and particularly in the making of the laws of our own nation, which have been so long and justly extolled for their wisdom and humanity, and which have raised the British name far beyond that of any other people; we should then be in a situation to make a proper estimate of the inspired volume, and set a suitable value upon its singularly wise and wholesome principles and suggestions. With what enthusiasm do we hear all the most celebrated writers on jurisprudence over the whole world, and particularly the writers on the fundamental laws of our own

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country, whose names are every moment on our lips as oracles of legal wisdom and authority, speak of the value of the Scriptures; and how studiously careful are they to reverence the injunctions they contain, and to point out to mankind the advantages derived from the laws of a state being grounded upon their commands and authoritative declarations! We have only to look into Grotius, Puffendorf, Bacon, Haile, Coke, Lyttleton, and many other eminent writers on jurisprudence and civil and criminal law, to be fully satisfied of what is here stated. Indeed every writer on the general principles of civil and criminal legislation, without almost a single exception, declare they have no foundation for any wise, enlightened, and humane system of legal philosophy, but what the Scriptures afford them. They resolve their principles, precedents, and authorities into the word of God; and consider a quotation from that word as quite decisive of the wisdom or expediency of any system of law, either general or particular. These writers say in substance, "here is the Bible; hear what it has to say on such and such questions; we must be governed by its decisions, and must consider its authority beyond the reach of any human appeal."

It is impossible to estimate the amount of evil

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which mankind would experience in their civil capacity, were the Scriptures no longer considered of divine origin, nor constituted the ultimate standard of all moral and political obligation. All reverence for the laws would cease; for the lawgiver would have only his own authority, or the mere glimmerings of what he might style the law of nature, to enforce his commands; while those who had to obey the laws would soon have every just and equitable principle banished from their minds, and every sacred feeling obliterated from their bosoms. The whole fabric of society would soon go to pieces, if men were removed beyond the sphere of the public and private sanctions of Scriptural morality.

It has sometimes been urged against the morality of the Scriptures, that it gives too much countenance to the doctrines of passive obedience and non-resistance; and is, therefore, not favourable to civil liberty. There never was any objection more groundless than this. It is true that the Scriptures every way recommend our ready and cheerful obedience to the laws of the state; but this obedience is only conditional, and rests upon this principle, that these laws are just in themselves, equitably administered, and productive of good to the great

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body of the people. Tyrants of every grade, from the man who sways the imperial sceptre, down to the being who is in the situation to have one human creature under his authority, are denounced as being hateful in the sight of the Almighty; and instances almost without number are given of the severe punishments which have been awarded to them for violating the principles of justice and humanity, and abusing the trust reposed in them. The care which is manifested throughout the whole of the Bible for the poor and the distressed—those who in every state are destitute of the means of a comfortable existence, and are therefore in a condition the most likely to fall the frequent victims to private and public oppression—is singularly humane and paternal. And this care is often expressed in such moving and beautiful language, that he must have a curiously-constructed mind indeed, that is not deeply affected by its tender and benevolent accents.

We esteem it a most important duty, as members of a civil community, to watch over with the utmost vigilance and care those general and vital principles of policy on which the whole social contract rests, and which equally secure the rights and privileges of the many who have to obey, as

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well as the power and authority of the few who are appointed to rule and govern. The interest we feel in preserving those principles from outrage, either from popular fury or tyrannical power, stands so high in our estimation, that we place it at the head of the list in our catalogue of moral virtues; and the man who lays down his life for the inviolability of these public principles, is designated, and very properly too, a martyr to his country's welfare, and a friend to all mankind. In conformity, therefore, with these opinions and sentiments, how ardently ought we to venerate the Scriptures, which contain, not merely principles for the social welfare of this particular nation or of that, but the chartered liberties of the whole human race! But such is the inconsistency and waywardness of the human mind, that it is no uncommon thing to see persons of talents and influence labouring most disinterestedly to obtain or preserve the benefits of general liberty, and who are really desirous of improving the condition of all around them; yet at the very same time, and in the very same breath, ridicule and contemn the sanctuary of divine truth and justice, and trample under foot those sacred maxims of equity, and rules of moral obligation, without which, the civil liberties they are contending for,

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and the schemes of social amelioration in which they are embarked, can only prove delusive and empty phantoms!

We have hitherto looked at what may be termed only one of the features of Christian morality, that of its political or judicial influence. We have dwelt upon this view of the subject rather fully, for this reason, that the benefits we derive from the Scriptures, as members of a civil community or state, have been too much of late thrown into the back ground, both by political and moral writers. But it ought to be borne in mind by the reader, that the happy influence of the Bible upon the private character of individuals, ought also to form a very important element in our estimation of the value and excellencies of Christian ethics. To dwell, however, upon this division of the subject, would be altogether unnecessary here, as there are so many valuable works, particularly in our own country, which have descanted at considerable length, and with great force and eloquence, upon the beneficial influence of Christianity upon the life and conduct of its professors.

I do, therefore, with all due submission, earnestly recommend a careful and diligent perusal and study of the Scriptures to every general reader, as well

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as to the student of moral philosophy. Independent of the peculiar doctrines taught therein—doctrines which will always be considered of vast and paramount importance to every human being; we will find a great benefit, even in an intellectual point of view, from consulting the records of divine truth, with a proper feeling, and a candid attention to their merits. I am fully convinced that there is a much closer connexion between mental superiority, and a belief in the Scriptures, than is commonly imagined. Sceptical modes of thinking have a direct and natural tendency to beget a captious, quibbling, sophistical habit; to create and foster literary arrogance and conceit; to destroy whatever is candid and ingenuous in controversial warfare; to make the mind diminutive, rickety, and distorted; to induce men to set a higher value on crotchety sophisms than on the inspirations of real wisdom and science; to make them more eager to puzzle and bewilder than to convince and instruct; to lead them to view questions of great and acknowledged interest to the species with coldness, apathy, and distrust; to throw a gloom and cloudiness over the whole mind; to cause men to take delight in picking holes in the garment of knowledge, instead of endeavouring to multiply its shel-

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tering folds over their race; to mistake verbal wranglings, and snarlish disputations, as certain indications of real talent and genius; to make men slaves to ambitious singularities and mental eccentricities; and, in one word, the general and most valuable of our mental principles become paralyzed and enfeebled, by a constant habit of frivolous doubting, and minute fastidiousness as to the degree of evidence required to produce firm and rational conviction on subjects of vital importance. On the other hand, where the Scriptures are embraced with that sincerity, heartiness, and singleness of mind, to which their manifest importance so justly entitles them, we will perceive a comprehensiveness, a vigour, and elasticity given to our minds, which cannot fail to place us on the vantage ground, whatever branch of knowledge we may choose to cultivate, or to excel in. The mind, no longer gropping its way through the hazy and murky atmosphere of doubt and uncertainty, advances with a firm and confident step, under the bright and irradiating influence of the sun of truth. By the contemplation of whatever is grand and sublime in doctrine, and pure and simple in precept, our minds are naturally led, by our established constitution, to spread themselves into a wider compass; to improve their vari-

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ous powers or faculties, by giving them an enlarged sphere of action; to dwell upon what is great, noble, and excellent; to pursue our course with freedom and boldness, unencumbered with babbling sophistries, and cheered with the consolatory reflection, that we are engaged in promoting whatever is esteemed among mankind fair, honourable, and praiseworthy.

THE END.

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